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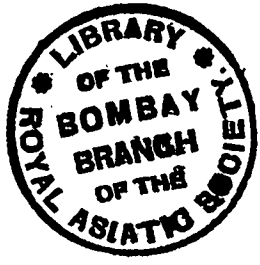
BY

WALTER BESANT

AUTHOR OF 'AS WE ARE AND AS WE MAY BE,' ETC.



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PREFACE

THE first seven of these ten pieces show Sir Walter Besant's early interest in French writers and French history, mediæval and modern. He has described in his Autobiography how, during his term of office as Professor in the Royal College of Mauritius from 1861 *to* 1867, *he was thrown in contact with colleagues who stimulated in him the desire to become thoroughly acquainted with French literature. In consequence he read French widely and deeply, and on his return to England made a start in his career as a man of letters by contributing essays upon his chosen subject to various magazines. These papers—a selection of which are published here, while others have appeared in volume form previously—attracted considerable attention by their display of sympathetic knowledge, and secured for their author a position among his brother writers before the publication of fiction obtained for him popular recognition.*

The last three pieces in this volume, written at intervals varying from ten to twenty years later, show Sir Walter Besant's absorbing interest in the craft of writing, and his jealousy for the status of the man of letters. An International Copyright Act between this country and America has come into being since his reflections upon literary piracy, and in several other directions the circumstances have altered from what they were when he described them; but reference to the dates at which the papers were published, which in all cases are affixed, will make the position quite clear to the reader.

The collection of pieces illustrates well the twofold direction of Sir Walter Besant's activity. He appears as a man of letters and a man of affairs; as a lover of romance and a fighter for practical reforms.

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ESSAYS AND HISTORIETTES

KING RENÉ OF ANJOU*

THE annals of mediæval Europe are red with the blood of murder and assassination: and yet the individual crime seems for the most part to produce no political consequences. It is an episode, a small bit of by-play in the great drama of the world, which gives life and incident to the stage: the scene-shifters remove the corpse, and the murdered man passes away as unheeded as any common soldier who falls from a casual bullet, or any Bardolph who is hanged for stealing. In the history of the first and second House of Anjou there are, however, two noteworthy murders, which bore their fitting fruit of bloodshed, war, and ruin, even unto the third and fourth generation. The

* 'Le Roi René: sa Vie, son Administration, ses Travaux Artistiques et Littéraires,' etc., par A. Lecoy de la Marche; Paris: Firmin-Didot Frères et Cie., 1875. 'Œuvres Complètes du Roi René,' par M. le Comte de Quatrebarbes; Angers, 1845. 'Chroniques d'Anjou et de Maine,' Bourdigné.

first is the judicial murder of Conradin by Charles, the morose brother of Louis IX., which entailed on the French House a hundred years of Italian wars; the second is the murder of Duke Louis of Orleans, which brought about, among its thousand evil consequences, the enmity of Burgundy towards all who bore the cousin name of Anjou. It is with the latter, and its effects upon King René—the last of the race—that we are concerned.

There seems at first no reason why, because the Duke of Burgundy murdered the Duke of Orleans, the Burgundian House should follow the Angevin with relentless animosity. But their hatred arose from the action of Duke Louis of Anjou, who expressed his loathing at the murder by sending home little Catherine of Burgundy, the betrothed of his grandson, with all her jewels and presents. He would have no further alliance with the murderer than that of cousinship. The act was construed into an unprovoked insult, and treasured up for subsequent revenge; and the desire for revenge found, in due course, an opportunity in the innocent person of René.

The second House of Anjou began with Louis I., son of King John. It was to him, her far-off cousin, that Joanna I. of Naples bequeathed, subject to his power of conquering and holding them, the crown of Naples and her splendid heritage of Provence. With this bequest, too, he received the title of

King of Jerusalem. Later on, he bought of the heiress the title of King of Majorca, the islands, like the realm of Naples, to be his on condition of conquest. And, as if two crowns were not enough, he received by bequest of Jacques, son of Margaret de Courtenay, the equally barren titles of Emperor of Constantinople and Prince of Achaia.

Louis I., with the help of French money, made a vigorous attempt and failed. He saw his armies, his treasures, and his resources wasted in a vain effort, and he died on Italian soil, altogether broken down with disappointment. Louis II., his son, abating no jot of his father's pretensions, was crowned in great state by Pope Clement VII. at Avignon. He, too, made his descent upon Italy, and even won an important battle, which he neglected to follow up. Then he had the sense to give up the contest as hopeless, returning to France, disgusted with Neapolitan treachery. But, to make up for losing one kingdom, he added another to the list of Angevin pretensions, and claimed the crown of Aragon. And then he died.

If it is true that sons inherit the virtues of their mothers, then René should have been strong and prudent as well as honest and brave, for strength and prudence were qualities which eminently mark the character of Yolande of Aragon, his mother, wife of Louis II. She is one of the many women who light up the pages of French history, in their

lifetime conspicuously influencing the destinies of the nation, sometimes for evil—as Brunehaut, Isabeau, and Catherine de' Medicis—but more often for good—as Blanche, Yolande, Claude, and Margaret of Angoulême. Amid the wild and distracted figures which, in this wretched time, flit across the stage, killing and being killed, plundering and being plundered, Yolande stands alone, a widowed woman, always wise, always self-contained, always watching and working for her sons and daughters, her people, and France. She has been reproached for caring more to keep the English out of Anjou than to drive them out of Paris, a reproach based upon a purely modern notion of Paris—*la France, c'est Paris.* That was not so in the fifteenth century. To the woman who ruled in Anjou, Paris was nothing but the capital of the mad king, and the home of the infamous Isabeau. The city she mostly cared for was her own Angers. Paris was a warning to all the nations and a cup of trembling; in Paris the people ran up and down the streets wringing their hands for starvation and misery; in Paris the children lay moaning for hunger on the dung-heaps, till death released them; in Paris desperate men cried to each other, 'Mettons tout en la main du diable; ne nous chault que nous devenons;' round Paris, for sixty miles, the land lay devastated and barren; in one short space of five weeks there died of starvation 50,000 Parisians. It was the special

business of Yolande to prevent Angers becoming like unto Paris, and her special praise that she succeeded.

René came into the world, being the second son of Louis II. and Yolande his wife, two years after the great Paris murder, in the year 1409. He was born in the great castle of Angers, venerable even in that day. Philip Augustus began the old pile, Louis IX. finished it. They still point to the tower, and even the room, in which Yolande gave birth to *le bon roi René*. The parents named the child after St. Renatus, sometime Bishop of Angers, who was famous for the interest he took in cases of childbirth, and they founded a mass in honour of the saint. Then the boy was given to Nurse Tiphaine, who had already taken charge of his sister Marie, and the years of infancy began. Fortunately for the historian there are no stories about René's childhood, no remarkable and precocious sayings attributed to him; he was, indeed, as unimportant a princeling as any in Europe. Yet a pleasant light is shed upon those years when we read that on the death of the old nurse, fifty years later, René erected a tomb for her at Nantilly, near Saumur, on which he placed her effigy, holding in each hand a child dressed in a *maillot* covered with *fleurs-de-lys*. The two children were Marie and René. And on the tomb the king wrote an epitaph in verse. There is a French commonplace that no

man can be wholly bad who loves his mother. What, then, is to be said of the man who for fifty years never ceased to love his nurse, and after her death wrote for her an epitaph, 'pour grant amour de nourreture,' in which he ends by asking a prayer from every reader?

> 'Je vous pry tous, par bonne amour,
> Affin qu'elle ait ung peu de vostre
> Donnez lui ugne patrenostre.'

In 1413, when René was four years old, an important betrothal took place in Paris, at which were present Queen Isabeau, Louis II., King of Naples, with Yolande his wife, the Dauphin, Charles Duke of Orleans, and Bernard Count of Armagnac. The bridegroom, who was ten years of age, was Charles, Count of Ponthieu, third surviving son of Charles VI., and the bride was Marie of Anjou, daughter of Louis and Yolande, who was nine. After the betrothal Yolande took both the children away with her. The boy, destined to be Charles VII., was thus happily removed from a court where a mad father was alternately the subject of mirth and pity, and an adulterous mother was alternately the subject of mirth and curses. He belonged to a stock physically in decadence, and was a weakly child, standing greatly in need of the healthy country life.

As yet, however, the Count of Ponthieu was a boy, with but a slender chance of ascending the

throne, living with his father-in-law, learning knightly accomplishments. It has been argued that Charles and René were playfellows, and thus began in early life the friendship which lasted till death. But Charles, being ten on his removal to Angers, belonged already to the courtyard, and was being taught to ride, to tilt, and to fight, while René still belonged to the nursery. Friendship is impossible between two boys of whom one is five years older than the other. Probably, however, the younger boy very early conceived a natural respect for one who was better skilled than himself in manly exercises, bigger, and stronger. We can follow the movements of both lads, year by year, from extant itineraries. In 1414 Yolande was at Angers and at Saumur, with her children. In 1415, the year of Agincourt, she went to Provence, also with the children, to meet her husband. In 1416 they were in Paris, but after the discovery of the so-called Burgundian plot to murder the whole royal family at a stroke, they returned to Angers. In that year the Dauphin died; in 1417 the next in succession died also, and Charles suddenly saw before him the prospect, gloomy enough, of becoming King of France. In the same year died also Louis II. of Anjou. As younger son, René succeeded to nothing but the Duchy of Guise, with certain lands and territories, the whole of the Anjou inheritance going to his elder brother, Louis III.

Charles, now dauphin, passed out of the hands of Yolande, and went to Paris. Presently there happened the massacre of the Armagnacs, the murder on the bridge of Montereau, the misery of Paris, the loss of Rouen, and the proclamation of Henry VI. over his father's grave. No reign ever opened more disastrously. France was conquered, but there yet remained two provinces where the people were safe and the country free from the invader. In Provence, Yolande ruled wisely and diligently, appointing judges, diminishing taxes, suppressing the sale of offices, re-establishing old privileges and granting new, and laying her plans to win the hearts of a people on whose loyalty she might have to call for the defence of her children and herself. Maine fell into the hands of the enemy, but the Battle of Beaujé, where the Duke of Clarence was killed, decided the limit of the English invasion of Anjou, which thus escaped comparatively untouched.

In the black times which followed Yolande alone was the support of the unfortunate young king. It was she who kept firm to their allegiance the Counts of Clermont, Auvergne, and Languedoc; she levied an army against the Duke of Suffolk; she won to the king the Duke of Brittany. When Joan of Arc appeared it was by her that the maid was examined; when Joan marched on Orleans, Yolande pawned her plate to pay for the expedition; when

a demonstration was planned in Touraine, it was Yolande who hired the Spanish mercenaries.

Meantime her eldest son, Louis III., was fighting for his father's and grandfather's claim in Italy. Ladislaus was dead, Alfonso of Aragon was the adopted heir of Joanna II., and the Angevin claim was an old story. Nor could the Duke of Anjou have hoped for success but for the whim of the queen, who suddenly changed sides, threw over Alfonso, and named Louis her heir. Thereupon he entered Naples triumphantly, fought on with better prospects, returned to France to fight for Charles, married Margaret of Savoy, and went back to carry on the never-ending struggle in Italy, where he presently died, exactly like his grandfather, worn out and disgusted with Italian treachery. Amid all her cares of state Yolande, meantime, had found time to think of her second son. The Angevin princes not only possessed immense estates and boundless pretensions, but, by their connections of marriage, might look to possibilities in many directions. Twice a single life only stood between Anjou and the crown; the throne of Naples was three times almost won; the long array of principalities, lands, and titles held by the descendants of the first Charles of Anjou, of whom René was one, covered Europe from Bohemia to Spain with a sort of net. Life for warlike princes is short, and it was impossible to foretell what crowns might be offered

to any one of the numerous cousinhood. René's first chance came through his mother. Yolande was the granddaughter of the Duke of Bar, and all her uncles were dead without issue except one, Louis, cardinal bishop. A claim for part of the succession had been long pending, and now the cardinal terminated the dispute by adopting René as his heir.

The Duchy of Bar was, however, only to serve as a *point de départ*. Beyond the Barrois lay the rich and fertile lands of Lorraine, where the reigning duke, Charles II., had two daughters and no sons. The English Duke of Bedford was an aspirant for the hand of the heiress, an alliance which would have completed the encircling of France by hostile provinces. Yolande offered her son René. On the one hand the traditional policy of Lorraine was to maintain friendship with Burgundy; on the other was the bait of the Duchy of Bar, with the friendship of the wealthy Anjou House. The marriage of René with Isabelle was agreed to after much negotiation, and finally celebrated on October 24, 1420, the bridegroom being not yet twelve and the bride ten. In the following year the cardinal formally ceded to René the title of Duke of Bar. And then, for the next five or six years, the young duke divided his time between Bar and Nancy. His tutor, probably provided for him by the cardinal, was a certain Jean de Proissy, under

whose direction he learned the use of arms and the culture of letters. 'Vacquant l'une fois aux armes et l'autre aux lectures, et tant prouffita en tous les deux exercices, qu'il estoit tenu en iceulx, plus que son jeune âge ne requéroit, expérimenti et savant.'

It is certain that many of the lessons he learned from observation at the court of Nancy must have been the reverse of profitable to the boy. The duchess, a pious woman, who had charge of René's bride, was neglected by her husband, who, to the great scandal of his people, lived openly with one Alison du Mai, a Lorraine woman of low origin. Such elevations to pinnacles of vice have always excited the wrath of Frenchmen. They see no just cause for indignation when the monarch chooses his favourite from demoiselles of birth, like Agnes Sorel, Gabrielle d'Estrées, or Madame de Pompadour; but they are disgusted when an Alison du Mai or a Dubarry is elevated to the steps of the throne. It is the expression of a feeling not put into words; as if kings are like Moslem sultans, bound by none of those laws of virtue which, with poverty, hunger, dirt, and rags, are burdens laid upon the poor.*

* Witness the author of the 'Chroniques Martiniennes.' Speaking of Charles VII., he says: 'À cause des nombreux travaux que le roi avait accomplis pour réconquerir la plus grande partie de son royaume, il fut décidé qu'on lui donneroit les plus belles filles que l'on pourrait trouver.'

Perhaps, as is often the case with healthy and vigorous minds, these scandals, together with the stories of what was going on at the court of Philip, produced no permanent impression upon René. The *curiosité du mal* was not with him, as with some young minds of artistic leanings, an irresistible force; and his after-life, with his poems and his pictures, sufficiently prove that his tastes, if not his principles, deductions conceded for known backslidings, steadily made in the direction of virtue. At the court of Lorraine, too, he had a great deal to learn. He lived amid the din and clash of arms; he was daily practising himself in knightly exercises; he heard of nothing but feats of valour: there was but one glory, that of war; but one pride, that of birth; but one duty, that of gallantry. At fifteen he was an accomplished prince, skilled in music and in verse-making; already a favourite with the ladies, 'qui le voyaient volontiers;' and steeped by the cardinal in respect for the Church. He might have become, but for one influence, that of his mother, a mere knightly fighting machine, governed by certain laws of honour. Yolande could not, it is true, make René a politician. No Angevin prince, not even the first of the race, possessed the duplicity, craft, and farseeing mind which go to make a Louis XI. But she taught him a few principles in politics from which he deduced a simple rule of conduct.. It was this: Angevin, Burgundian, or

Breton, it mattered not, one was always, as holder of a royal appanage, as younger son of the royal line, a subject of the French king. Corollaries to this maxim naturally followed. Self-interest was to be subordinated to crown interest; crown influence was to be extended in every direction; the cadets of the Royal House were, if necessary, even to efface themselves, provided the royal interests could be so advanced. We do not say that René ever deliberately formulated these conclusions, but it can be demonstrated that they lay in his mind and ruled his life. And they were due to the teaching of Yolande. As regards his duty to the people, we have his own written testimony: it was the duty of the king

'Défendre les orphelins, les veuves, les malheureux, soulager ceux que la violence opprime, châtier les criminels, rendre a chacun la justice qui lui est due; tel est à nos yeux le rôle du souverain. Celui à qui est confié le salut de l'état tout entier a le devoir de passer ses nuits dans l'insomnie pour ménager aux autres la tranquillité, d'entendre par lui-même les causes importantes et généralement toutes celles qui interressent le bien publique, de pourvoir, enfin, au bien être de son peuple, comme un chef et comme un père.'

In person, René was well-built, tall, and strong. The portraits which remain of him, taken in middle and advanced age, show something of the prominence of feature which afterwards appeared so strongly in Francis I. His nose is long and finely cut; his

chin is long, sharply marked, and rounded; his eyes are deep set; his forehead is broad. The benevolent expression is that of an old man who has resigned himself to the buffets of fortune, not that of one who has never ceased to fight. In youth one can well understand that the resigned eyes would be full of ardour, the set lips parted, the bowed head proudly lifted to meet the storms or sunshine of fate.

His first military experience was gained in a little civil war between the Duke Charles of Lorraine and his nephew the Count de Vaudemont, who claimed succession to the dukedom on the ground that Lorraine was a masculine fief, and could not descend through the female line. There were three years of fighting over this dispute, in which the young Duke of Bar took his share. Then Charles convoked the nobles of Lorraine, and obtained from them a formal recognition that the duchy had always been a feminine fief. De Vaudemont, foiled for the moment, retired to his own castle and waited his opportunity.

Then came the episode of the wondrous wood maid of Domrémy. The Duke of Lorraine received her, and with the characteristic view of securing first all that might be got for himself, asked her to cure his gout before she began the liberation of France. Joan told him scornfully that she had nothing to do with disease, but that if he

would dismiss Alison, give her René, and send soldiers to the king, she would pray for him.

This was in February, 1429. In May the old Cardinal de Bar, in the name of René and himself, swore fealty to Henry VI. René answered by leaving his father-in-law and joining his own king. Characteristically, the first as well as the last independent act of his life is one of loyalty. Of course it was greatly against his interest to offend his uncle and his father-in-law. He was present at the coronation in Rheims cathedral with his two brothers, Louis and Charles. In the fighting which followed, René's luck took him to the passage of the Marne, the assault on Paris, where he rescued Joan and was wounded in the shoulder, and the battle of Chappes, where the defeat of the Burgundians established the royal power in Champagne. It was a brilliant beginning, and the young prince showed himself full of courage. 'Moult estoit vaillant chevalier et de grant cœur et estoit encore en son grant venir par quoy tant plus se devoit monster fier et courageux.' The military tutor of the young hero was old Barbazan, the Nestor of chivalry. It was he who taught René how to handle troops: he tried, also, to teach him how to hold them back, but in this he failed.

In June, 1430, René came into his inheritance. The cardinal died, showing his resentment at the last by as many bequests as he could make to his

heir's detriment. Six months later the Duke of Lorraine, who had not taken Joan's advice, and so got rid of his gout, died too. The people of Nancy did not disguise their happiness at this event: they prepared for a grand reception of René and Isabelle; they put Alison du Mai to death, lest there should be one sorrowing face to mar the universal joy; and they shouted *Noëls* for the young duke and duchess, of whom, in the confident hope that always attaches to princes young, handsome, and brave, they expected so much.

René, Duke of Lorraine, Bar, and Guise, was now one of the sovereign princes of Europe, with a revenue far short indeed of the Burgundian Duke, but rivalling that of Brittany, and at this luckless time probably even exceeding that of the crown. That Lorraine should be snatched from the Anglo-Burgundian interests, and by a son of the hated Angevins, was not to be endured patiently by Duke Philip. He looked about for a pretext, and found one in the claim of Antoine de Vaudemont, whom he encouraged, and to whom he sent money and troops. René, for his part, looked to the king for help. It was no longer a struggle between two rival claimants for the Duchy of Lorraine—it was part of the great war between France and England. With René were the whole of the Lorraine and Bar nobility. Vaudemont had none but his own dependents. Whatever force there was, therefore,

in public opinion went for René; but it was absurd to speak of right or of public opinion. Burgundy and England were behind the one, France behind the other. In the enumeration of the armies this is most clearly shown. That of Antoine was commanded by Toulongeon, Philip's most devoted lieutenant, burning to efface the memory of Chappes. With Toulongeon came 1,400 Picard archers, a large number of Burgundian knights and lords with their lances and men-at-arms, the Duke of Savoy, the Prince of Orange, the Count of Fribourg, and the English captains, John Adam and Thomas Gagaren. Vaudemont's ranks were also supplemented by a certain number of the rascally adventurers who crowded into any country when war, pay, and pillage were to be found.

In René's army were, beside his Lorrainers and Barrois, a large number of German knights with their followings, a horde of inexperienced bourgeois, and—his most solid force—old Barbazan with 200 lances and a corps of archers. The accounts differ as to the number on either side, but it seems probable that René had the numerical superiority.

The two armies came within sight of each other at a place called Sandocourt, near Chatenois, in the Vosges, in the evening of Saturday, the 30th of June, 1431. All Sunday Toulongeon expected an attack, but from some unexplained reason none came, and in the evening he retreated to Bulgné-

ville, where, by the advice of the Englishman, John Adam, he threw up earthworks and entrenched his army. Early the next morning René came up with them, and because he was too courtly a knight to waive any of the amenities of war, he sent a herald, inviting Antoine to wait for him. The challenge once sent, it was mortifying to learn from Barbazan that the enemy's position was too strong, and that it would be necessary not to commence the attack.

What was to be done? On the one side a position which would have to be forced at the sword's point, over ground too difficult for cavalry to manœuvre; and on the other a host of young knights gathered round a young and fiery prince, clamouring madly for the charge. The prudence of the old soldier was thrown to the winds, and René began the battle. The Lorrainers rushed forward, led by their chivalry and supported by a small body of archers. It was eleven o'clock, and a burning July sun shone fiercely in their faces. In front of them were earthworks which the horses could not get over, and behind these lay the enemy, protected from their arrows. The assailants surged on, crushed together, until before and between the trenches they were unable to move forwards or back. Never was luckless army caught in such a *guet-apens*. Suddenly the Burgundians unmasked their artillery, and by a single discharge mowed down half of the helpless mass. Then they sprang

from their strong positions, and fell with spear and sword upon the disordered ranks. The battle was over as soon as begun. In the general rout and panic 2,000 Lorrainers were killed, the finest army René ever got together was dispersed, and eighty knights were taken. Among the killed was stout old Barbazan, who paid for his chief's rashness with a soldier's death. Among the prisoners was René, who surrendered after performing those prodigies of valour, the memory of which is wont to solace the discomfited and to inspire the chronicler.

The personal courage of René is beyond any doubt. Princes, indeed, are generally endowed with the hereditary gift of bravery. But something more than mere courage is wanted for success, and for the lack of that something René's career, which might have been brilliant, is one long catalogue of reverse and disappointment. He could fight, he could administrate, but he could not command. He was ignorant of generalship. The battle of Bulgnéville was only the first of many disasters estined to teach him what he never perhaps understood—his own military incompetency. Unlike its successors, it afforded him leisure and opportunity for reflection; for Toulongeon claimed the illustrious prisoner for the duke, his master, and René was conveyed to prison.

This was part of the revenge for the insult offered by Duke Louis to his cousin in sending back the

little affianced princess. René was the prisoner of Antoine de Vaudemont, but the Duke of Burgundy would not let him go. They placed the captive first in the Castle of Talent, near Dijon; then at Bracon-sur-Salins in Franche Comté, where a plot was set on foot to effect his escape, but it was betrayed by a Burgundian who had been taken into the secret; thence to Rochefort, near Dôle; and from there to Dijon itself, where they still show the *Tour de Bar*, the tower where the Duke of Bar—the only title they would allow him—was confined. And here, with his happy readiness to find distraction in art, he employed himself in painting, possibly under the tutelage of John Van Eyck, with whom he afterwards remained in correspondence. Isabelle, his wife, meantime governed for him. She closed the gates of all her towns against Vaudemont; she forbade any of her subjects to obey him; and she referred—doubtless knowing beforehand what would be the result—the question of the Lorraine succession to her council, who, for their part, passed it on to the Emperor Sigismund. In April, 1432, René was released on parole. He gave his two sons as hostages, placed four of his castles in the hands of Philip, obtained further guarantees from his Lorrainers, and promised to give himself up on May 1, 1433. Then he went to Nancy, with a whole year before him to face his difficulties. These consisted not only in providing for his personal

ransom—the amount of which was not fixed—but also in meeting the claims raised by his vassals for losses in the war. As regards the Vaudemont pretensions, it was proposed that they should be met by the betrothal of the heir of Antoine de Vaudemont to Yolande, eldest daughter of René, with a *dot* of 18,000 Rhenish florins and 1,200 florins of *rente*. This business arranged, René joined forces with his late enemy—Count Antoine—and proceeded to clear the country of the brigands, *écorcheurs*, and *routiers* who infested every road, plundering and murdering at their pleasure.

Philip did not immediately—on the expiration of the twelvemonth's grace—claim the execution of the promise; not from any magnanimous motive, but from policy. He was growing cold as regards his English alliance. His prisoner would be the most useful man in the world in preparing the way for future negotiations. Accordingly René rode southwards, ostensibly to visit his mother in Provence, but really to confer with Charles on the reconciliation of Burgundy.

Then followed the Emperor Sigismund's decision in favour of René against Vaudemont in the Lorraine claim, and the triumphant return of the former to his capital of Nancy. Philip expressed his resentment at the affair being taken out of his own hands by immediately calling upon René to surrender himself on his parole. There was

nothing to be said against this command. René mournfully returned to Dijon, to endure another captivity more rigorous than the first, and Philip had his prisoner back again. Attempts have been made to depict the Duke of Burgundy as a conqueror of quite the most magnanimous order. His magnanimity resolves itself, on a statement of facts, into revenge and self-interest. He robbed the Count de Vaudemont of his prisoner—Burgundy being officially no more concerned in the quarrel between Vaudemont and René than Russia in that of 1876 between Servia and Turkey. That he joined in the dispute was in revenge; that he claimed the prisoner was in revenge; that he kept him was also in revenge—always for the old insult: he only set him free on the security of most important guarantees and hostages, and then not till his personal influence with Charles might be useful to himself. He did *not*, as has sometimes been stated, conduct his prisoner to the rejoicings at Chambéry. When the Lorraine claim, out of which he hoped to make more capital by keeping it unsettled, was decided by the emperor, he recalled his captive, and shut him up in durance more rigorous than was held to be courteous towards the commonest knight; and when he did at length allow him to go free, it was when every voice in Europe was raised against him, and every farthing that could be exacted was claimed and granted.

It was in December, 1434, that René returned to prison. Had he known what news was then travelling post-haste towards him, he might possibly have forgotten that he was the descendant of King John, or, remembering that he was the grandson of Louis I., might have refused to go back to prison, as his grandfather had done. For, six weeks before his return to Dijon, his brother Louis, who was childless, died in Italy; and six weeks later, while he was entering his prison gates, Joanna II. herself died, leaving by will, as Joanna I. had done to Louis I. of Anjou, her realm of Naples to her cousin René.

Think what an inheritance this was which had fallen to the captive knight! No dream of Arabian imagination ever conceived so grand a fortune. King of Sicily and Naples by a double title—by the right inherited from his grandfather and by the late Queen's will—and absolute Lord of Provence; holding Anjou, Maine, and Bar, as a younger son's appanage, of the French crown, with absolute sovereignty, to revert to the king only on failure of male issue; holding Lorraine on the same tenure, of Sigismund; King of Jerusalem and Majorca (we hear nothing as yet of Aragon), with right to the empire of Constantinople if things should turn up in his favour on the Bosphorus, and Prince of Achaia, if that was worth adding. He was titular monarch, this prisoner who gazed with unshaven beard, untrimmed locks, and tearful eyes, through the bars

of his Dijon tower, over nearly the whole north shore of the Mediterranean. Could he enforce his claims, he might become a more powerful king than Charlemagne, a greater warrior than Guiscard, a mightier name in history than Godfrey; he might spread the French influence over all the lands around the great internal sea; and but for that terrible day in the Vosges—that unlucky order, against the advice of Barbazan, to charge; that braggadocio invitation to the enemy to wait for him—he would have been safe in his city of Nancy, with his gallant old friend and general, alive and well, to ride with him from end to end of his splendid realm of Naples.

But he was a prisoner, Barbazan was lying dead, and Philip wanted the uttermost farthing. Isabelle, for her part, proceeded in advance of her husband to Naples, armed with full powers. Then came the conference of Arras, and the detachment of Burgundy from the English alliance. All France interceded with the duke for the release of his prisoner, and a ransom, preposterous in amount, was finally agreed upon. The King of Sicily was to cede to Philip certain lands, rights, and possessions, to pay 400,000 crowns of gold, to find guarantees, and to undertake no quarrel on account of the past. These conditions being accepted, Philip (February 3, 1437) *quitta sa foi* to René. The terms were to be somewhat lightened by the betrothal of René's elder son John to Marie de Bourbon, in

virtue of which 100,000 crowns were remitted as the bride's *dot;* but as she died in the following year, nothing was gained by that, and the weight of the ransom fell upon him at a time when he wanted to bring all his resources to bear for a single decisive campaign. The importance attached to René's person may be estimated by comparing his ransom with that of other contemporary prisoners. It was a hundred thousand crowns more than the English had demanded for the Duke of Bourbon, two hundred and fifty thousand more than they asked for the Duke of Orleans. And the delays in the settlement of the amount, which kept him still in prison or else at Nancy, when he ought to have been with Isabelle in Naples, were productive of irreparable loss and damage.

At last, however, René was free. It was characteristic of him that the first thing he did on his release was to visit at Vaucouleurs the spot where Barbazan was buried, and to found a chapel where masses might perpetually be said for him and the rest of those who died for him at Bulgnéville.

It was not till April, 1438, that he was able to sail from Genoa to Naples, where Isabelle anxiously expected him. What were the petty disputes of Bar and Lorraine, the enmity of a Vaudemont, even the hostility of Philip, compared with the prize which lay before him, an inheritance which to dwellers on this side the Alps, from Guiscard to

Napoleon, has ever appeared far more splendid than the sunny fields of France? René forgot that from father to son the Italian claims had always been fatal to his house; he did not realize as yet that, though Naples was his by every right recognised by his contemporaries, though the Durazzo line was extinct, though his cause was chosen and blessed by the Pope, there was ever against him a subtle enemy —beneath whom his grandfather and his brother had perished, vainly calling on the faith of treaties —an invisible, stealthy, never-dying enemy, more dangerous than the malaria of the Campagna, more fatal than the breath of a marshy jungle—Italian treachery.

Alfonso of Aragon, first adopted by Joanna, before she changed her mind and chose René, naturally refused to accede to the new arrangement. But while René was still a prisoner, a sea-fight off Gaeta, resulting in Alfonso's defeat and capture, seemed to settle all difficulties. Alfonso became prisoner to Visconti of Milan. But he was persuasive of tongue: in a few months he actually talked his captor into giving him his pardon, without ransom, even into passing over to his side. The war broke out again, and when René sailed into the Bay of Naples, on the 19th of May, 1438, he had the mortification to find that things had gone badly with the Angevins, that Isabelle was practically blockaded in Naples, and that on either side the city, from the

battlements of Castel Nuovo and those of Castel Ovo, floated the banner of Aragon.

It would take us far beyond our limits were we to follow René step by step along the labyrinthine path of his Italian failure. It was a brilliant failure. He began by having the sympathies of the people, which seemed to be worth something and were not; he had the veterans Caldora and John Cossa on his side; he had the influence of the Pope and the weight of the Genoese. But against him was a leader as brave as himself, and far more subtle. René was apt to be chivalrous in the wrong place; Alfonso was crafty at the right; as when, coming suddenly upon his enemy, René, instead of falling upon the unprepared army, must needs send heralds with a challenge glove. Of course Alfonso kept the heralds all night, entertained them royally, made his preparations meanwhile, and in the morning was ready for a retreat, which he changed into a brilliant strategic movement upon Naples, while René was occupied in the Abruzzi mountains, receiving presents and getting through ceremonies. Alfonso's siege of Naples lasted thirty-six days, and would have been successful, for the city was without defenders, but for the death of Don Pedro, Alfonso's brother. It was rumoured that the cannon-ball which struck off his head came from a church on which he was impiously firing. The soldiers were demoralized, and would fight no more.

Then followed some successes for the Angevins. The two castles at Naples were retaken; efforts were made to arrange the claims of the two princes, but without result; and then a great calamity befell René. Caldora, his veteran and trusted general, fell at the siege of some little fortress, and his place was taken by a son, who had all his father's vices and none of his virtues. Caldora gone, the Aragonese began to recover their lost ground. It was in consequence of a message from the young Caldora that René performed his famous ride, the most brilliant feat of daring on record, across the hills, right through the enemy's lines, with only forty French knights and a few Neapolitans on foot. After two days and two nights of dangers and adventures, the little band reached the mountain fortress of Benevento. Joining his forces with those of the young Caldora, René found himself for the first time face to face with his rival. The battle was already won, the Spaniards were already in confusion, when the traitor Italian recalled his soldiers, and all the advantages were lost. The French returned in bitter mood to Naples, where René consigned his treacherous general to a dungeon. But Caldora was stronger than his king. Outside the city the soldiers mutinied, declaring that they would go over to the Spanish camp unless Caldora was set free. To appease them René, who should have suffered them to go, whatever happened, and who ought to

have beheaded Caldora, released him. This was the one greatly weak act in his life: it was punished by the secession of the Italian, who instantly went over to Alfonso. The Aragonese, reinforced by the troops of the traitor, pressed close round the city of Naples; the siege began; and René, who flattered himself by no illusions, saw that his chances were hopeless. Indeed, the war was virtually over. Naples beleaguered, and on the point of starvation, would have been obliged to yield in a few weeks or days, had it not been taken by treachery. Forty Spanish soldiers found their way into the city by means of a secret conduit; an alarm was given; the Spaniards themselves were seized with a panic and rushed towards the nearest gate. The sentinels, thinking the city taken, dropped their arms and fled, and the banner of Aragon was hoisted on the wall.

René, we are told, displayed that leonine courage, common to defeated monarchs, which he had shown on the occasion of his last disaster. He even had the good fortune to utter an historic phrase. To a French knight who urged him to fly, he is said to have uttered these noble words, 'C'est à un roi que tu dis de fuir.' And the chronicle goes on to relate how the king, moved by the excess of his wrath, clove the adviser to the chin. It would have been more to the purpose had he cloven a few Spaniards to the chin, because, in spite of his grandeur of soul,

the king actually had to fly. Castel Nuovo received him, and the miserable city was sacked. This was on the 2nd of June, 1442. A few days later the defeated king, with such of the Neapolitans as chose to go with him, escaped in a Genoese ship.

The heroic chapters in René's life are closed. Henceforth, although but thirty-three, he is to become a prince chiefly devoted to art, letters, and pacific rule. The same year which deprived him of a crown saw the death of his mother. Her death obliged René to hasten at once to his Duchy of Anjou. At the moment, Charles, who had succeeded in driving the English out of Guienne and recovering Landes, was at Toulouse, where René joined him, accompanied by his wife, who made thus her first appearance at the French court. She had among her maids of honour a certain Agnes Sorel, who had formerly been in the train of Queen Yolande. The favour of the *Dame de Beauté* began from this time. Agnes Sorel was born in 1409, and died in 1450. She was therefore no longer young (in her thirty-sixth year) when Charles took her from Isabelle de Lorraine. Her power lasted till her death, a period of six years. One of the few good things recorded of Louis XI. is that he once boxed the favourite's ears for speaking slightingly of his mother. History, following the lead of Brantome, and regarding this woman in the light of a patriot, has dwelt lovingly [illegible] her beauty and her influence.

The only merit she seems to have had was a certain amiability of character. For the rest, as the chronicler says, 'Elle n'eut point honte de son péché.' There were, it is true, three good patriots among the women of France under Charles VII. They were Yolande of Anjou, Marie of Anjou his wife, and Joan of Arc. But Agnes Sorel is not among them. She had nothing whatever to do with the expulsion of the English and the patriotic ardour of the king. Such ardour as Charles VII. showed may fairly be ascribed to the legitimate influence of his wife, Marie of Anjou, René's sister, the pale sad woman who always dressed in black velvet and white kid gloves, and who at this gathering of the two Courts was delivered of her twelfth child and her eighth daughter. And then the Court, being presently joined by Charles of Orleans, newly released from his long English prison, held high festival. The marriage of René's eldest daughter Margaret with Henry VI. of England followed in 1445. It was characteristic of the Anjou House that part of the *dot* given to the bride consisted of their claims and pretensions over the crown of Majorca and Minorca, whenever Henry might get time to conquer those islands. Perhaps René found the burden of life easier when he had dropped one of his long array of titles. Great rejoicings accompanied this ill-starred marriage; and after a grand tournament, in which King Charles, René, the Duke of Calabria

his eldest son, and Ferry de Vaudemont took part, the two kings accompanied the bride on her way. Another marriage was also arranged at this time between Yolande, René's eldest daughter, and Ferry, the son of his old enemy Antoine; and this event proving a settlement in full of all the Vaudemont claims, and a successful foray having been conducted against the *écorcheurs*, who were again infesting the Lorraine roads, René held a magnificent tournament, a full account of which may be read in the Chronicle of Chastellain.

The next fifteen years were spent in comparative peace, but not in idleness. This prince, whom we know chiefly from Scott's novel, and have come to regard as wholly given up to poetical conceits and pageantries, is chief adviser of the Crown, while he actively administers Anjou, Provence, and Lorraine; he negotiates the restoration of Maine by the English, and he introduces organization with discipline into the king's lawless troops. This, indeed, was René's greatest gift to France: he brought to bear his Italian experience, abolished free corps, subjected the soldiers to some kind of garrison restraint, and prepared the way for the work of Coligny, a hundred years later, in the reform of the army. 'All the affairs of the State,' writes the Milanese ambassador, 'are governed by him.'

In 1447 he left Anjou for Provence, travelling with an immense retinue, as became so grand a

seigneur, by barges up the Loire to Roanne, and thence down the Rhone to Tarascon. Here he received a visit from the dauphin, who was amusing himself with conspiracies against his father, and tried ineffectually to shake the loyalty of his uncle. René's principal work in Provence was the pacification of the Church. By his means the anti-pope Amadeus was persuaded to exchange a sham tiara for a real cardinal's hat.

After these heavy labours a little recreation ought not to be grudged the hard-worked prince. He amused himself with the establishment of a chivalric order, called the 'Ordre du Croissant,' and held a grand three days' tournament in its honour. The prize of valour was adjudged to Ferry de Vaudemont. Hardly were the trumpets of the lists silent, when an alarm of war came from the north, and René, with his nobles, marched to join the king in the triumphal campaign through Normandy.

At this period René is at the height of his power, though not yet of his popularity. He is lord of the three richest and most prosperous provinces in France, not one of which has been devastated by foreign occupation; he is entirely trusted by the king, his cousin and brother-in-law; he has wiped out the disgrace of Naples by the conquest of Normandy; he has everywhere advanced the power, the prosperity, and the political influence of France; he is in the prime and vigour of manhood; in his

children he is as yet happy; one son-in-law is still King of England, though he has lost France; another, Ferry de Vaudemont, is a knight after his own heart; he is acknowledged leader in the science of chivalry, expert in the jurisprudence of tournaments, heraldry, precedence, and rights of princes; none better than he, not even Charles of Orleans, knows better how to touch the lute to the strains which most please courtly ears; he alone among princes can paint devices, blazon shields, represent the faithful effigies of a brother prince, as deftly as any master from Italy or Flanders. René walked the earth at this time with the self-satisfaction which became his position. 'King, warrior, statesman,' he might have said; 'poet, painter, herald, knight, architect —in myself behold them all.' And had there been at his side, after the fashion of a *Danse Macabre*, a lean and hungry Death to whisper truth in his ear, he would have heard: 'King thou art, but thou hast no subjects; warrior, but thou hast fought and failed; statesman, but the world is changing front and thou understandest not the future; poet, but thy poetry is the pale and delicate blossom of an unnatural growth, doomed to die and be forgotten; painter, but men shall deny thy skill; herald and knight, but the days of chivalry are over; architect, but not one of thy constructions shall remain.' All this might have been prophesied. But in 1451 there was not a cloud upon the horizon, and save for the

ugly fact that Alfonso was sitting where René would fain have been—upon the throne of Naples—all was sunshine with the King of Sicily.

In 1452 he lost his wife, Isabelle of Lorraine. She had been the companion of his boyhood and his bride at an age when he was scarcely old enough to write himself man. She had worked and struggled for him with more than wifely devotion. She was a *grande dame* who accepted her place and ruled as to the manner born. René mourned for her, and would not, for a time, be comforted. He buried her in a sumptuous tomb of his own design, and he multiplied upon the walls of his castle an allegorical emblem of his grief, representing a bow with a broken cord, and the Italian legend, *Arco per lentare piaga non sana*. He ceded the duchy of Lorraine, his through right of his wife, to the heir—his son John—and gave the administration of the Duchy of Bar to Ferry, his son-in-law; and then his attention was called away to affairs in Italy, where there seemed a chance once more for the House of Anjou. Florence and Milan sided with René, Venice and Genoa with Alfonso, Rome stood neutral. Charles promised to send the dauphin to help his cousin, and René went into Italy. We need not follow him through a campaign in which the honours of the war were his, while the solid prizes remained with his enemy. Sforza, his ally, made use of René to humble the Venetians, but had no intention of

conquering a crown for him; and the duped victor returned to Provence, swearing that no inducement would ever again be strong enough to make him set foot in Italy. Later on, when Alfonso died, leaving only an illegitimate son, and the Neapolitan nobles with one accord invited René to return, he remembered his oath and refused, sending his son, John of Anjou, who resembled his father in his military qualities—he could fight, but he could not follow up a victory. He defeated Ferdinand at Sarno, but allowed him to escape. The blunder could not be retrieved, and the crown of Naples was lost to the Angevins for a fifth time. In 1454 René married again. His second wife was Jeanne, daughter of Gui, Count of Casal. She was twenty-one years of age, and seems to have been of a sweet and retiring disposition, particularly fond of nature and a country life, affecting that pastoral existence of which her husband sang and Chastellain wrote.

'J'ai un roi de Cecile
Veu devenir berger,
Et sa femme gentille
De ce propre mestier.
Portant la panetière,
La houlette et chapeau,
Logeant sur la brugère
Auprès de leur troupeau.'

René was now five-and-forty years of age, a time when most fighting men begin to think of repose.

He had married a young wife, whom he loved passionately, and he began the quiet, artistic home life, which he kept, with one interruption, to the end.

The interruption belongs to French history. It was the last expedition commanded by René—that against Genoa. He was to co-operate by sea—bringing a reinforcement of 1,000 Provençaux—with his son, who commanded the French forces on shore. René had no time to land: a panic set in among the soldiers; those who could swim made for his ships, where as many as these could hold were taken in. René had to sail away, leaving the miserable fugitives to be cut down by an enemy who gave no quarter. The expedition was a disastrous failure. The blame ought not, perhaps, to be laid upon the leader, yet it is the rule to judge a general by his results, and the defeat at Genoa is a part of the unlucky René's 'record.' It has been said that the news of this defeat, brought home by René himself, accelerated the end of Charles VII. That is not true. The King was in a dying condition when the battle was fought, on July 17, 1461, and he died on July 22, too soon for the news to reach him.

King René's life may be divided into five acts, of which we have now seen four. They all contain effective situations. At the end of the first he surrenders his sword to Toulongeon; in the second

he is a prisoner in the Tour de Bar, killing time with painting and poetry. Suddenly, as in a transformation scene, the walls around him fall, and he stands forth free, sword in hand, his front encircled with the crown of Naples. The curtain drops at the close of the third act on the king heroically defending a fallen city, with the historic *mot*, 'C'est à un roi que tu dis à fuir.' In the fourth, he is the successful general, statesman, and lover. The defeat at Genoa belongs, as we have said, to the history of France. It was not on his own business that he was there, and the disaster was not by his fault. All this is as it should be in a tragedy. Action and vicissitude in the first three acts; glory and greatness in the fourth; in the last, disaster, failure, and bereavement.

The last chapter in René's life is made up, politically, of his evil treatment by Louis XI.; personally, of a long and happy time spent in the society of his young wife, among his poets, artists, and musicians. The acts of Louis XI. towards his uncle, like most of that crafty monarch, may be partly justified on the ground of national interest. At first, the King of Sicily is, next to the Duke of Burgundy, the most powerful of the princes; he will no longer be the chief adviser to the Crown, but he must be conciliated. Powerful as René was, his power sustained a severe blow when, in 1464, his son returned from Italy after a crushing defeat.

That avenue to greatness was closed unless the king would lend his ear to the dream of French influence in the Mediterranean, which had cost the Angevins so much. Louis would not; he had work of a more real kind at home. Nor would he help Margaret of Anjou to recover her crown in England. To René this apathy to the interests of a French prince who had always placed his own aims second to that of the king seemed simply impious. His cause in Italy was, like that of every pretender to a crown, the cause of God; his daughter's party in England was equally blessed of Heaven. That both crowns should be allowed to pass out of their rightful owners' hands without a further struggle was a thing he could not understand. Yet, with the loyalty which never deserted him, he sided with the king during the civil war of the *Bien public*, even though his son and all the leading nobles of the country were against him. An adhesion so important and so opportune would have produced in any other prince a lasting gratitude. Louis, however, following a well-proved rule in diplomacy, was wont to reward his enemies before his friends. What he did for René was to promise a yearly subvention to further his pretensions in Italy, and to betroth his daughter to Nicolas, René's grandson.

Once more, and for the last time, the shadow of another crown lights upon the brow of René. The

Catalonians, refusing any longer to obey their sovereign, John II. of Aragon, proposed to replace him by Don Pedro, Infant of Portugal. But Pedro died, and then, looking about for a successor, they discovered that René of Anjou, whose mother, Yolande, was daughter of John I. of Aragon, stood near to the succession. Further, John II. was the brother of René's old rival, Alfonso, a fact which might fairly be considered likely to influence him in accepting an offer of immediate succession, subject to the condition of vanquishing his old rival's brother. In other words, he was to be offered the chance of wresting a crown from the very nation which had robbed him of his own. René accepted. Louis XI., who had reasons of his own for breaking off with John of Aragon, suspended the discussion of all points at once between himself and his uncle, while the latter recovered a realm 'which had fallen to him by hereditary right.' René sent his son to fight for him, and at the same time obtained a Genoan fleet to co-operate with his army, which was composed almost entirely of Angevins, Provençaux, and Lorrainers. It was in 1467 that John of Anjou crossed the Pyrenees with his newly-raised army: he had with him Ferry, his brother-in-law, Gaspard Cossa, and other tried officers. He was welcomed at Barcelona with every manifestation of rejoicing, and proceeded to establish a regular government in the name of his father. René, mean-

time, was acting in the interests of the king with the Duke of Brittany. For these services he was paid in promises and empty privileges, such as the right to use yellow wax for his seal, to wear the collar of St. Michael, and so forth. But he hoped in vain for the serious co-operation of Louis in Spain. The king looked on with interest, while his uncle wasted his resources in Aragon. The struggle, if it was successful, would remove a possible enemy across the Pyrenees; if it failed, would weaken the great prince who stood so near the throne. As regards the king's own policy, he thought the dream of French power and influence in the Mediterranean of far less importance than his immediate work of breaking up the power of the princes and developing the municipalities.

René followed the shadow, Louis held to the substance. Yet in this case the crown of Aragon was nearly becoming a reality. The Duke of Calabria marched from one victory to another, aided and seconded by Ferry de Vaudemont. Almost at the same moment both of them died, carried off by a sudden illness, with grave suspicions of poison. In a few months after this event the Anjou cause in Spain was hopelessly lost.

Broken down in spirit, René resolved on exchanging Anjou for Provence, where he would be nearer the scene of operation. It is not likely that now, past sixty years of age, he dreamed of reigning

either in Naples or Barcelona. But he had still to work for Nicolas, his grandson. Divine rights, unfortunately for nations, are not extinguished by the death of their holders or the collapse of their armies, and in Italy René always had a small following, either faithful to himself or malcontent with the Aragonese. He left Angers, accordingly, in 1471, promising his people that he should be brought back to them in death, though they should never see his face again in life.

Nicolas of Anjou, betrothed to Anne, daughter of Louis XI., was with the king, and treated with the respect due to his rank and to his future position as son-in-law to the king. Suddenly the news was heard that the young prince had left the Court, had retired to Lorraine, and was betrothed to Marie, daughter of Charles of Burgundy. It seemed incredible that after two generations of hatred the two houses should be reconciled. But it was true. A Montague was to marry a Capulet. The heir of Anjou was to marry a princess of Burgundy. The news was alarming to Louis. Between the two the king of France would be as a piece of iron between the anvil and the hammer. For with René ended the traditional loyalty to the crown. Neither his son nor his grandson understood it. Then that strange fortune by which death so often assisted the king stepped in here to frustrate Charles's hopes of so powerful an alliance. The young Angevin prince

died suddenly at Nancy. It was with a sort of *acharnement* that death seized upon René's children one after the other. John, Ferry, and Nicolas, all died suddenly; all died with suspicion of poison; all died to the advantage of Louis. Besides these, his brother, Charles Count of Maine, his grandson, Prince Edward of Wales, and his natural daughter Blanche, were all swept away at the same time. The House of Anjou, save for the feeble son of Charles of Maine, and the children of Ferry and Yolande, was extinct.

Then began the *tracasseries* for the great heritage of René which troubled the prince's last days. Louis XI., with a base ingratitude almost incredible, seized on Anjou and Bar by a *coup de main*, declaring that they were royal appanages, and that he meant henceforth to rule them for himself. Nor was it enough to rob his uncle: he must torture and insult him by forging a charge of *lèse majesté* against this old supporter of the Crown. René was powerless to defend Anjou against the whole weight of the king. Fortunately, however, the course of events came to his assistance, and the battles of Granson, Morat, and Nancy made his grandson, René II., previously the young and unimportant Duke of Lorraine, a victorious general who might prove dangerous. Then Louis tried conciliation. René, he proposed, should recognise what had been done in Anjou and Bar; he should swear to carry on no conspiracy

with the enemies of the Crown. In return, the king would grant him a pension of 60,000 francs. René at once acceded to the promise of loyalty, and voluntarily offered pledges that the principal cities of Provence, over which the Crown had no right, should abstain from any traffic with the king's enemies. So far, however, from accepting the usurpation in Anjou, he put in a solemn protest against the usurpations made by the king in his territories.

Louis had recourse to promises. Would his illustrious and well-beloved uncle meet him at Lyons? Thither René repaired in May, 1476—'et luy fut faict très grant honneur et bonne chière.' The situation began by being impossible—it ended in a compromise. Louis wanted to keep Anjou and acquire Provence—René wanted to keep Provence and regain Anjou. The latter, in failure of heirs male, would naturally revert to the Crown; the former, on the death of René, would revert to his nephew, the son of his brother, unless by will he bequeathed it to his grandson, René of Lorraine. The many-titled old king consented at last that Provence as well as Anjou should go to his nephew. It is almost certain that he understood the inevitable consequence of this agreement. For Charles of Maine was of failing health; it was well known that he would have no children. And Louis would succeed him. This act of René, his last of political importance, has been represented as that of a weak

and selfish prince, anxious only to secure the peace of his latter days at the expense of his heirs. But his only heir, and that in the female line, was his nephew, while the young René, the son of Yolande and Ferry de Vaudemont, to whom he also left the Duchy of Bar, was richly provided for with the domains of Lorraine. And remembering that the greatness of the Crown was the dominating political principle of René's life, is it absurd to suppose that Louis might have pointed out how the nation would become strong sooner by internal cohesion than by external influence; and that the heirs male of the House of Anjou being represented solely by himself and his dying nephew, the Crown, in the interests of France, was the best heir to Provence? Far, far better a united kingdom, whose cities were ruled by their own bourgeois, and provinces administered by lieutenants of the king, than that disjointed France, now passing rapidly away, in which the monarch was but *primus inter pares*, and not always the strongest. Before the failing eyes of the aged prince there may have passed a vision of the present, as old men seldom see it—he may have caught a sight of those new forms which were growing out of the old and dying; he may have recognised the fact that, like the prophet and lawgiver, he was standing, while the cold hand of death waited to take him, upon a mountain top, looking at the goodly heritage of the future generations.

Now, at last, all was done and over for the good old king. His part was played out. He had played it well if not successfully. Already, in his own lifetime, he was become an illustration for moralists on the instability of things human. Chastellain, who wrote, for the consolation of Margaret in her poverty and retirement at Saumur, the 'Temple de la reines quelques nobles malheureux,' places among the unfortunate princes René himself.

'Wouldst thou consider, and that more closely, another example which will strike thee to the heart? Have recourse then to thy fallen King René; straightway regard and examine in meditation his virtue and conduct for forty years; how, fallen in the fortune of war and in great disaster, brought to danger of his cities and his lands, then freed from captivity and become King of Naples, every way hindered by Alfonso, King of Aragon, and attacked *de forte main*, he became at length constrained to abandon his royal city, to leave Naples, his true inheritance, leaving behind him crown and sceptre and possessions in the hand of fortune, to return to his own in France with the name of king without a kingdom. . . . But what change hast thou perceived in his cheer by which his virtue was less conspicuous? Hath he not borne his first loss with constancy, his second repulse with submission to the Divine pleasure and the force of others which prevailed over his own, till to-day with immortality of hope? Yea, verily, in which he hath glory.'

During the last years of his life René lived almost entirely at Aix. Thither came the young René, Duke of Lorraine, in the vain hope of making his

grandfather alter his will and leave him Provence. Thither came an ambassador from his old enemy, the Aragonese King of Naples, alarmed at the impending accession of strength to France. Thither came his heir, the feeble Charles of Maine, old before his time, and destined to die a year after his uncle. They only troubled René, who desired nothing more but to be left in peace. In November, 1479, the Milanese ambassador writes that the King of Sicily is dying. It is premature, but he has not long to live.

'The castle of Aix is quiet now. There are no more pageants. The clash of arms, the cry of those who tilt, the voice of those who sing, the proclamations of heralds, the trumpet of warder, are silent in the courts; the retinue of men-at-arms grow fat for lack of exercise. In these days the people of Aix come out to look upon a white-headed old man who creeps feebly along the southern garden walks, or sits basking in the warm sunshine of a Provence spring. He is accompanied by his wife and a girl. Perhaps as he gazes southward he is thinking of the day when, with pennons flying, amid the blare of clarions and the shouts of the people, he sailed into the Bay of Naples, and landed to take his own. Perhaps he remembers the day, happier still, when, boy bridegroom with girl bride, he rode with Isabelle through the streets of Nancy, and the Lorrainers shouted *Noël!* It is his consolation, at least, to feel

that he has failed in no one particular of the perfect knight—loyal to king, courteous to dame and demoiselle, generous to knightly foe.

Then the girl—it is Margaret, daughter of Ferry and Yolande—takes the lute, and sings the song which he made himself for Jeanne de Laval.

'Et tout premier, vous ne povez
Certes nyer que ne devez
Avoir ouy ne l'ignorez,
Certainement.
Qu'ainçoys que jamais nullement
Je vous veisse, si chièrement
Vous amoye et parfaictement,
Voire trestant,
Que mon cuer dès lors tout battant
Vous donnay.'

'In the year of our Lord's incarnation,' writes the archivist of Aix, 'fourteen hundred and eighty, on Monday, the 10th of July, the second hour after noon, or thereabouts, our lord and king, René (may his soul remain in everlasting rest, Amen), a prince of peace and pitiful, died and ended his last days, with the weeping of all the Provençaux, and especially those of Aix.'

A year later, the Angevins stole away the body secretly, because the Provençaux would not give it up, and conveyed it to Angers, where they buried their beloved duke with great pomp and ceremony.

Jeanne de Laval lived for eighteen years after her husband, chiefly in Anjou, where her happiest days

had been spent. Charles of Maine died in 1481, leaving to the Crown of France the splendid provinces of the south. René II. assumed the title of King of Jerusalem, but his pretensions were usurped by Charles VIII., with results which belong to French history. Margaret of England did not, as is represented by Scott, reside with her father, but lived out the rest of her sorrowful life at Saumur. The race of the Angevin princes was extinct when Charles of Maine died, save for the descendants of Ferry and Yolande, from whom sprang a long line of Dukes of Lorraine; and through them a lineal descendant of René is the present Emperor of Austria.

Around the name of this prince, a man of unrivalled intellectual and physical activity, of whom no black story has to be told, whose scutcheon has no blot, there has gathered a halo which obscures its real splendour. Even those who know better than to accept Scott's caricature as a truthful picture speak of René as—in spite of valour, culture, and genius—a weak prince. Yet his history is full of strong things. It was a strong thing, for instance, to abandon his best interests in the Barrois, and rush to the aid of the deserted king; no weak man could have disciplined and organized the lawless marauders who formed the chief part of Charles's troops; it was a strong thing to hold the kingdom

of Naples for four years against a foe more numerous, richer, and better officered—for René was a bad strategist; he was strong in his internal administration, if wisdom is strength; and it was eminently a strong thing to stand by the king his nephew, the only prince of the blood, against a confederacy of all the rest, including the king's brother and his own son.

On the other hand, popular tradition is like a schoolboy's nickname: it generally sums up a character with rough truth. René is *le bon roi*. 'Oncques prince,' says Bourdigné, 'n'ayma tant subjectz qu'il ayma les siens, et ne fut pareillement mieulx aymé et bien voulu qu'il estoit d'eulx.' It seems a paradox to suggest that the tradition of weakness springs more from the memory of René's virtues than from his political failure.

It was natural, perhaps, that a prince should be regarded as weak who never deceived or looked for deceit. Those—still all but a few—who consider diplomacy as a synonym for duplicity, statecraft another name for intrigue, must needs look on René as weak. France has produced a few men conspicuous for such weakness—Louis IX., Bayard, Coligny, Lafayette, are the best known besides *le bon roi* René. Their defeats are the victories of the world. The reputations of such men are sacrificed on that altar where humanity slays those who would lead them higher. They are the martyrs of loyalty.

And another thing. René, in an age when most princes, like unregarding gods, rode among the people, producers of the fruit which they were born to consume, showed himself tender and pitiful, like a mere mortal. He walked with them and talked with them; was perpetually giving them things; built hospitals for the sick and sent them physicians; allowed the meanest to see clearly what manner of man he was. So that, because there was no mysterious greatness about this prince, there grew up for him among the common people a sort of contempt.

Let us, apart from politics, consider René's place as poet and artist. Like all cultivated princes, he was a great builder. His taste for architecture was inherited from his mother Yolande, who began those improvements at Angers which made of the grim old castle the most magnificent residence in France. It is difficult to realize how those gloomy chambers, with their thick walls and narrow windows, could ever be made pleasant. But we forget the possibilities in the way of colour open to mediæval decorators. The cold stones were covered with tapestry—not those colourless hangings which we see in museums, but bright with gold, *vair et vermeil;* the or, argent, gules, and azure of innumerable coats of arms, blazoned on wall, door, and window, lit up the dark chambers; the dresses of those who walked in them were resplendent with

gold and green, black and white, blue and crimson; the sunshine that poured through the lancet windows was shattered into a thousand dazzling rays of reflection as it fell on sparkling hilts and polished cuirasses. Outside, the courts of Angers Castle were crowded with motley groups, Angevins, Lorrainers, Provençaux, and Italians: the fashion of each was different, and the fashion of each was splendid. Beside the soldiers were the *gens de la robe*, the king's councillors: among these were the ecclesiastics. Wherever there was a clear space young knights were tilting and young pages exercising. Outside the castle, but still within its walls, were the gardens, where the ladies of the Court strolled and sat and listened to music. They were full of new flowers and plants introduced by René himself. Near the gardens was the royal menagerie, the finest in the world, where were lions, leopards, dromedaries, ostriches, monkeys, peacocks, and many strange and wondrous animals. Within the castle there was the *étude*, where the king's artists sat at work; and for all to admire there was the chapel, filled with painted glass, very rare and costly.

The castle of Angers was not the only place which René embellished and improved. The castles of Saumur, Aix, Tarascon, all received additions and alterations at his hand. He was also one of the first to be infected by the strange impulse which when the English were driven out of the

country and the roads partly cleared of the *écorcheurs*, seized the whole of the nation. For a hundred years nearly the whole of France, except the south, had been perforce living in castles and walled towns. In many districts the only cultivated lands were those which lay within horn-sound of the gates. Suddenly, the danger removed, France discovered rural life. It was like a revelation. The nobles—René the earliest—left their strongholds and built themselves peaceful country seats—*manoirs*—on the banks of rivers. Of these René constructed no fewer than six in the neighbourhood of Angers, where the good king loved to stay with his paintings and his books, and to superintend his vineyards.

René, who was another Chosroes for palaces, is forgotten as an architect, but he lives as an artist. Every ancient canvas in Anjou or Provence is attributed to him. Many of them, including the *Buisson Ardent* of Aix Cathedral, the *Adoration of the Magi*, the curious picture showing the Church militant, the Church suffering, and the Church triumphant, have been reproduced as the actual handiwork of the prince by M. de Quatrebarbes in his splendid edition of the works of René. There is no absolute proof whatever, except the voice of tradition, that any one of these works is by René. It is certain that he painted; that he studied the art during his captivity, and of Flemish masters; that

he corresponded with John van Eyck, and that at Naples he knew Colentino del Fiore, Angelo Franco, and Antonio Solario, called Il Zingaro. The pictures attributed to him have the Flemish melancholy, and show that tendency to philosophical allegory which is a marked characteristic of the king's poems. It is also certain that he illuminated Books of Hours. If he painted, therefore, why should not these pieces be genuine examples of his art? Because, unfortunately, it is also certain that one picture at least attributed to René was executed by two Flemish artists working under his directions and executing his conceptions. He painted with his own hand a Magdalene, which he gave his wife: he presented the monks of Laval with a Crucifixion, painted by himself: he decorated the chapel of his prison at Dijon: he covered the walls of his *manoirs* with his device of a pan filled with burning coal, and the motto, *Ardent désir: dévot lui suis*, an expression of conjugal tenderness. But as a general rule he seems to have been contented to allow his work to pass unclaimed. The *métier* of painter was not yet, like that of poet, worthy of a prince. Besides painters, René collected round him a whole school of sculptors, who worked for him and by his directions. There was, indeed, nothing in the domain of art in which this prince was not interested. Gorgeous tapestry, the love of which was an hereditary taste, covered his walls, his chairs,

his ceilings. In one of his poems—*Le Cuer d'Amour épris*—he describes, evidently from his own collection, a long series of apartments richly hung with tapestry. He was magnificent in jewellery, having the most skilled and artistic workmen always occupied for him in the execution of his designs. He improved the art of coining. He made collections of arms and armour of all countries. He was sumptuous in the costumes of his Court, ordering his people to appear in scarlet, or in his own colours of gray, white, and black; and he may be written down as one of the first collectors of pottery. Nor was music, in which René was a proficient, neglected. He established for his own private chapel a choir, which followed him everywhere: his gifts to minstrels attracted crowds of *Tabourins* at every festival: he formed a 'private band,' to attend him in all his progresses.

Musicians, indeed, were necessary at the ceremonies in which René took such interest. It is easy to sneer at these functions: we should, however, remember that they were once very real things; the rights and privileges of rank were then strictly defined and limited. René, brought up by a proud and jealous mother at a proud and orderly Court, would be the last to think lightly of a ritual as sacred in his eyes as that of the Church. The ceremonial of pageants, tournaments, and festivals spoke in a language now lost. The symbolism of

heraldry, meaningless now to the multitude, was understood by them; the banners, arms, and blazons were read as easily as a printed book is read now; the order of the procession, the dresses, the very procession itself, spoke by allegory. Allegory and dumb-show taught not only the limitations of rank, the privileges of the bourgeois, the power of the king, but they taught morality and religious doctrine. Thus, in the *Fête des Fous* the bishops and canons gave up their places to the choristers, who sang *Deposuit potentes*, a ceremony which would be meaningless now, but which then taught the triumph of the lowly. Once a year, again, at Angers was represented the Marriage Feast of Cana, the wine being served out of the very same urn (René had it brought from Jerusalem to insure its genuineness) that had been used by our Lord. And the *Passion*, the *Resurrection*, the *Acts of the Apostles*, the *Three Kings*, the *Nativity*, were among the mysteries represented in the Market of Angers. But the greatest delight of the people was in a tournament, which provided all the splendour of an allegorical procession with the rapture of witnessing a fight. The principal tournaments held by René were the one at Nancy, to celebrate the marriages of Marguerite and Yolande; the *Emprise de la gueule du dragon*, held the following year at Ragilly, near Chinon, in which he fought in black armour, mounted on a black horse, being in mourning for his son Louis,

and won the prize; the *Empriſe de la Joyeuſe Garde*, or the Day of Launay, in which Ferry de Vaudemont was the victor; and the *Pas de la Bergère*, held at Tarascon in Provence.

From a literary point of view, René's place is eminently respectable. He was poet, prose writer, novelist, and *romancier*; above all, he was an allegorist of the old school. The *Livre des Tournois*, written about the year 1450, is the *locus classicus* for all questions of chivalrous ceremonial and etiquette. The *Livre du Cuer d'Amours Espris*, written after his second marriage, while he was in the full enjoyment of his peaceful and Arcadian life in Anjou, is the history of a dream, which enwraps an allegory. It is, in fact, a member of that innumerable family, the imitators of the *Roman de la Rose*, and, as in all mediæval allegories, down to the great *Trésor* of Rabelais, it was made the means of satirizing contemporaries and describing the poet's own life, adventures, and experiences. The Heart, a knight, sets forth on the conquest of his lady, *Doulce Mercy*. He has with him his squire *Désir*. They pass the country residence of *Dame Espérance*, the hermitage of *Jalousie*, a dwarf, the *Forest of Longue Attente*, the Fountain of Fortune, and the Heart gets lodged in a dungeon in the *Château de Tristesse*, whence he is finally rescued. The value of the work, which is alternately in prose and verse, consists wholly in the personal details, such as a description of the

Château de Plaisance, in which one can see the poet's own castle of Saumur, and in the minute details of ordinary life, over which René loved to linger.

In the *Abuzé en Cour* the poet paints his disgust of the world and contempt of greatness. Its date is probably about 1473. In this work he describes his own education: his seduction by *Abus* and *Fol-Cuider*, the husband of *Folle-Bombance*; the promises made him, and their hollowness; the waste of his youth; the spending of his substance; and his final retirement from the Court, with no other friend but Dame Patience, who cannot save him from being carried to the hospital by *Pauvrete* and *Maladie*. It is in the *Abuzé* that the well-known lines occur in which he gives the three things necessary to observe at Court:

> 'Tout regarder et faindre riens ne veoir;
> Tout escouter monstrant riens ne sçavoir;
> Mot ne sonner des cas qu'on sçait et voit.'

The best of René's works is the love poem which he wrote for his second wife, called *Regnault et Jeanneton*, for which read *René et Jeanne*. That there should be no mistake, however, as to the real person spoken of, the manuscript concludes with the shields of the two, under which the poet writes:

> 'Icy sont les armes dessoubs une couronne,
> Du bergier dessusdit et de la bergeronne.'

It is a genuine symphony of love, which may yet be read with pleasure. René, for the first and only time in his life, departs from the beaten track, and shows us, through the trellis-work of rhyme and conventional expressions, himself. It is not much that we see, but there is something. Unconsciously, this poet of the dying past feels a breath of the dawning future, full of warmth and life. Could he possibly have seen Villon, or read his verses? Villon was certainly in Angers during René's sojourn there. Bourdigné (not the chronicler) wrote during the same time his *Légende de Pierre Faifeu*, a Villonesque collection. But that is all we know.

Not the least remarkable among the gifts of this many-sided prince was the gift of tongues. French was his real mother-tongue, because, though his father was Count of Provence and his mother a Spaniard, his nurse was an Angevine. He spoke, however, Provençal; Italian, which he learned during his campaigns; Spanish, learned partly from Yolande and partly in Naples; and German, as is proved by the direct testimony of certain Bohemian gentlemen whom he received. It is possible, but not, we think, probable, that he knew English; and for what purpose, or for whose use, were those twenty-four volumes in Arabic collected by René for his library, unless he himself could read them?

Among the books in this library are treatises on botany (in Hebrew), on law, geography, astronomy,

physics, anatomy, natural history, ornithology, and military science. It is reasonable to suppose that those works were purchased by René for his own use, and the supposition is borne out by other facts. Thus, had he not been interested in geography, he would not have collected the large number of spheres, maps of the world, and descriptive pictures of his own cities which adorned his rooms at Angers and Chanzé. The works on natural history and ornithology which he bought were doubtless studied with reference to the specimens in his menagerie; and he not only bought books on astronomy and astrology, but also, which goes far to prove that he read them, had two astrolabes, and entertained at least three astrologers at his Court. One of them was Pierre de Nostredame, a Jewish physician, whom he converted, and who was the grandfather of the famous Nostradamus, astrologer to Catherine de' Medicis.

Intellectually, René was of clear yet narrow mind. He was brought up in the traditions of a school of thought which died out in his very lifetime. He could not, however, understand the change. He stood on the threshold of a world whose institutions, thoughts, principles, and religious life were to be different from his own. He knew the past, and thought that the future was going to be like it: he was the last of the knights, and thought he was one in an endless succession. The very songs he

sang struck upon ears already weary of their monotonous cadence and the iteration of their melody; the ceremonies which he led were about to lose the reality, so to speak, of their symbolism. Consider, he died in 1480. Sixteen printed books were already in his library; in twenty years nearly all the Greek and Latin classics would be printed; already the scholars of Italy were whispering that the philosophy of Cicero was better than the Romish mass; in thirty years the first Bible in French would be printed; in forty, Louis de Berquin would be burned for heresy. Columbus was already meditating his voyage. There would be few more tournaments, and those as artificial as the joust of Eglinton; and there were to be only two more kings in France to whom chivalrous things would be dear.

As for his personal virtues and defects, it remains only to be said that he was generous and prodigal. Like the Guises, he gave with *la main Lorraine*, that is, with both hands, so that, with all his revenues, he was always poor. They said of him at his death—

> 'Il donnoit tant, il n'avoit rien;
> Autant avoit hier comme hui.'

And as for his morality, if it was not altogether that of Saint Louis, his ancestor, it was better than that of Charles the King, or the Duke of Burgundy, or the Duke of Brittany. Much more might be said

of this good and great man, but we have said enough. To the common people he was the good king—*le bon roi* René. To statesmen like Louis XI. he was a fool. To artists of all kinds he was a brother and a protector. To the world at large he was a stately figure, the grandest of those who stood beside the throne : if he seemed sometimes to overshadow and eclipse the king, he was always at his side, loyally ready to fight for him. The princes of France, the Dukes of Berri, Orleans, Burgundy, and Brittany, were all, without exception, strong and brave men. They were lovers of literature, great warriors, profound statesmen ; but to none among them all was there given that personal grace which makes the character of their cousin of Anjou seem altogether lovely.

[1877.]

THE FAILURE OF THE FRENCH REFORMATION*

SOME time in the tenth century, when the Papacy was at its lowest point of degradation, when Christendom was only just recovering from the shock of the Magyar invasion, and when the light of learning had dwindled to a spark, there lived at Ravenna a certain scholar, named Vitgard. He was, we are told, one of those Italians who cultivated the art of grammar with more zeal than discretion. Accordingly, he became a person very open to the temptations of the Devil, who sent to him one night three emissaries, in the shapes of Virgil, Horace, and Juvenal. They assured the astonished scholar that he was destined to be the herald of their immortal glory; they persuaded him that his name should be associated with their own;

* 'Gerard Roussel,' par C. Schmidt; Strasbourg, 1865. 'Vies des Dames Illustres,' Brantôme. Les Œuvres de Etienne Dolet. 'La Renaissance,' Michelet. Les Œuvres de Bonaventure des Périers. Les Œuvres de Rabelais. 'Life of Clement Marot,' by Professor Henry Morley.

they admonished him to proclaim to the world that it had been blinded and deceived, that Christianity was a cheat and a snare, and that the only true gods were themselves. Deceived by their assurances, the unhappy Vitgard began, at first secretly, to teach these pernicious doctrines, and drew a small circle of disciples around him. Then he taught the same thing openly, and, the heresy beginning to attract attention, he was arrested by the authorities and punished in the usual fashion—that is, he was burned. On further investigation, it was found that there were many others, 'especially in Sardinia,' who held and taught similar doctrines.

Reading this queer old story by the light of common-sense, we can very well understand how, when the Bible was an unknown book, some stray scholar, getting hold of the Latin authors, and finding the wisdom that was there but nowhere else, might set up their authority above that of the religion he professed. We look back on the brief record of the unlucky Ravenna scholar, and are touched with pity. We can picture him, earnest and studious, drinking in the philosophy of Horace, the virtuous wrath of Juvenal, and the music of Virgil, not yet the enchanter. The things he reads are wiser than those taught in the schools or in the churches. And see—he knows nothing about dates —there is not a word of Christ from beginning to end ; not one word of the Apostles, nor of the Pope,

nor of the Church. Bewildered and agitated, he thinks there can be but one solution. The divine teachers of the world, they are these three; to them we must look for guidance; they alone can teach mankind to live and die. Presently the possession of this grand secret becomes too much for him; he reveals it, bit by bit, to clerks and students; finally he preaches it in the streets. Then authority interposes—such authority as remains in anarchic Italy—and consumes him, with his heresy, in the flames.

The centuries roll on; strange heresies rise and are crushed—none like this of Ravenna—until we find ourselves in the full Renaissance. It is on the eve of the greatest struggle the world has ever seen, between the old,—strong in veneration, union, fear, and custom, and the new,—weak, torn by internal dissension, and strong only in being a step nearer to the truth. And now history repeats itself, and the obscure old heresy rises from the dead.

In the first thirty years of the sixteenth century the world is slowly resolving itself into two camps. No bugle note has yet sounded to summon the soldiers to their colours, nor do they even suspect the approach of the inevitable battle. In France, with which we have to do, the people are reading the Scriptures in the vernacular, in spite of priestly prohibition; scholars are bringing to bear upon the Church the artillery of the new learning; Erasmus

has his Encomium Moriæ ; Ulrich von Hutten has his Epistolæ Obscurorum Virorum ; Louis de Berquin boldly picks out passages from the works of the zealous Beda himself, most orthodox of the Sorbonne, and in twelve propositions accuses him of heresy, whereat the world of Paris shrieks : and the Reformation is begun. Things look fairer in France than in Germany ; we are to have reforms in doctrine, with perfect freedom of inquiry and discussion, and we are to abolish all monks. A fair beginning, a goodly show of blossom : where, after fifty years, was the fruit ?

The story of the failure of all this glorious promise is too wide a subject to occupy us here. But apart from the main streams of political influences, Court intrigues, national profligacy, priestly craft, there are certain undercurrents in the history of the time, which, certainly not less than the forces known and visible to all, contributed from the very first to render the cause of the French Reformation a hopeless one. For the day of St. Bartholomew, we maintain, did not kill French Protestantism. Massacres cannot crush a creed, so long as it has any vital power, unless, which is next to impossible, they are thorough and complete. That these malign influences were a kind of subtle poison that attacked the cause at the very beginning, we intend to show by the consideration of two or three men of the time, little known.

Remark first that very early in the century, when Calvin and Farel the fiery first lifted up their voices, they were not alone. Side by side with them, *προμάχοι*, stood others—scholars, prelates, great and learned men. After ten years look again. These men have left them. Some are in the enemy's camp, silent, ashamed, cowed; some are on neutral ground, scoffing, sneering, laughing.

The former are the men of Queen Margaret's Court—the personal friends of that woman whose character, so sweet and lovely, stands out in such strong relief amid the blackness of her surroundings. In a selfish—an abnormally selfish—time her whole life is spent in sacrifice for others. In an impure time, she alone, the daughter of a vile woman, the sister of a profligate man, is pure. Amid all the babble of tongues and confusion of disputants, she sits, with her calm, beautiful face weighed down with sadness, reading the Bible, and praying that truth may prevail. Round her gather the best men of the day—not, unfortunately, the strongest—but those who are tinged with some of her Christlike love for others, men of sweet and holy thoughts. While her fate is dark and gloomy; while she is sacrificed first to one husband and then to another; while her brother—the idol of her life—breaks her heart but still exacts more sacrifice; while her little boy—her darling—is taken from her, she becomes more and more zealous in her schemes for a better

faith, and daily more absorbed in that mystic rapture of religion which makes her at times almost transformed.

And her own religion—what was it? Read, first, these lines of hers, of which we give a translation:

'Christian dost thou wish to be?
Like thy Master's shape thy days;
Worldly wealth renounce, and flee
Vain ambition's crooked ways.
Leave thy mistress fair and sweet;
Joys forego that once were dear;
Honours tread beneath thy feet,—
Art thou strong, the cross to bear?

'Conquer death; for with his dart
He is kind and fair to see;
Love him with as good a heart
As thy life is dear to thee.
Find in sadness all thy mirth;
Find thy gain in every loss;
Love the grave above the earth,—
Canst thou—canst thou—bear the cross?'

Read, too, her 'Miroir de l'Ame Pécheresse,' that work of pure and exalted devotion, and remember the fact that in the Heptameron the Lady Oisille spends part of each day in reading the Bible, while every story in the collection is made somehow to point to the same moral, and inculcate the same teaching. She was a Protestant in the sense that she held what we call distinctively Protestant

opinions; but she remained all her life in the Church, and neither wished to leave it herself, nor to see her friends leave it. For her whole heart lay in the design of a great Gallican Church like that of England, of which her brother, in whom she never quite lost faith, should be the supreme head. It was to be a church where pure doctrine was to be taught, but all in due form and order. The people were to be educated, but not to dispute on points of faith. Their duty was to live 'the life,' and read the Bible. There were to be no monks, no friars, no vicarious piety, no pilgrimages, no belief in masses, saints, nor any of the accumulated rubbish of the Roman Church. Had her circle of friends been men of coarser grain—of more courageous heart—she would have had her wish. But about all of them there was something feminine. They caught her tone, but they did not impart their own. They wished and hoped when they should have acted; prayed when it was time to fight; conceded when the time for concession had passed away.

Foremost among them was Jacques Lefevre d'Etaples, the eldest and perhaps the best of the French Reformers. He was already fifty years of age when the bells rang in the newly-born sixteenth century. He learned Greek in Italy, such Greek as one could then learn. His long life, protracted far beyond the allotted threescore years and ten, was spent in labours almost Herculean. Among his

works are commentaries and editions of Aristotle, in whose society he passed his first half-century; books on arithmetic; geometry, including an edition of Euclid; and, during the last forty years of his life, a mass of theological works, the mere contemplation of whose titles makes the ordinary brain stagger and reel. But among all his labours now forgotten, though they bore good fruit in their day, and were the honest work of a great man, there is one for which France owes him an everlasting debt of gratitude; for he it was who first presented his country with a complete translation of the Bible, 'La Sainte Bible en Françoys, traduite selon la pure et entière traduction de S. Hiérome.' It came thirty years after the first German translation, and, though full of faults, is yet a wonderful work for one man unaided to accomplish. Lefevre was of a retiring, meditative disposition. He loved to search in the Scriptures for that secret meaning which, he taught, lies hidden there, only for the pure of heart to discover by the aid of faith and prayer. He poured out his soul in *contemplations* and mystical treatises. He held that nothing was to be enforced which could not be found in the Bible; he urged the necessity of personal holiness and purity; but he rejected nothing in the Roman Church, wherein he had been brought up. He would not leave the Church of his childhood, though she would have burned him—*improba mater*—had she been able.

And a Catholic he died, after a life of more than ninety years.

Another of Margaret's friends was Briçonnet, Bishop of Meaux, one of the most zealous of Lefevre's disciples. He was the first who dared to use his own cathedral church for the promulgation of the new doctrines. Meaux, about twenty-five miles from Paris, was then a flourishing manufacturing town; and the quiet weavers, disposed to think and discuss, like all persons whose sedentary occupation gives them opportunity for thought, eagerly embraced a teaching which gave the individual man a dignity and importance previously unknown to him. The Bishop got Farel, Roussel, and the aged Lefevre himself to preach in his church—the same which years afterwards echoed back the silvery tones of Bossuet. 'See to yourselves!' cried Briçonnet from his pulpit, strong in the resolution of enthusiasm and hope, 'see to yourselves! and if I change my doctrines, look that you stand firm.' Alas! when persecution came, it was the Bishop that bent before the storm, while his poor weavers went unshaken to the flames. Henceforth he took care to make no noise, being a watched and marked man. Only he continued his correspondence with Margaret, finding in mysticism some consolation for the reproaches of his conscience. A good and holy man, but too soft for the work which he tried to undertake.

But by far the sweetest character among Margaret's friends is that of Gerard Roussel, whom she made Bishop of Oleron when she married Henry of Navarre. He is the ideal reformer, according to Margaret. Pure and blameless in life, entirely self-denying, laborious to the highest point, learned, eloquent, mystic, poetical—above all, a gentleman —there was no one in her little Court whom she loved more than Roussel, no one who more deserved her friendship.

When he went south with his protector, he instituted everywhere schools for the young, and, by perpetual preaching and exhortation, laboured to bring the priests of his diocese to a higher level. He wrote a catechism of instruction, in which he taught that nothing was to be a matter of doctrine which was not found in the Bible; that there were only two sacraments, and that personal holiness is the great essential. He met his death by a kind of martyrdom, but in a very singular fashion. For, having sent one of his ecclesiastics to preach at Maulĕon, in Gascony, the fanatic populace, headed by Pierre Arnauld de Maytie, a gentleman of the place, chased him from the church. Then Roussel, as the bishop, went there himself, summoned a synod, and, mounting the pulpit, preached on the subject of saints' days, pointing out how their multiplication led to superstition, idleness, and other evils. He was going on, when the same De Maytie

rushed forward with an axe and cut through the posts on which the pulpit was placed, so that it fell with the bishop. He was carried to Oleron, mortally bruised and injured, and died on the way. De Maytie was tried for the offence, and actually acquitted, while the approbation of the party at this brutal crime was further marked by their presenting the murderer's own son with the bishopric thus vacated. Deadly hatred could go no farther.

These three men are representatives of Queen Margaret's party of order. They belong to that very large class of whom we find so many examples whenever a great question is at stake, being, in fact, of those who follow a sort of instinct in trying to smooth things rough. A little concession here, a little glozing there, a constant parade of points of agreement, are their only weapons. Amiability is their chief virtue, or, at least, their chief characteristic. They are often scholarly, well-bred, of excellent taste, of pure and blameless lives; they are beloved by their friends, they are good and holy men; but in the hour of danger they are as weak as a reed. In matters ecclesiastical they too often enact the part of the good-natured bystander in a street row, who exhorts the disputants to shake hands and make it up. Presently the crowd closes in, there is a scuffle, and the mediator emerges from the fray with every external sign of having been actively engaged on the side that has lost.

When Calvin looked to France for help, it was first to Margaret and her circle; when they failed, he turned to the scholars. It was as yet but the dawn of French scholarship; but there were already in France, as there had been for fifty years in Italy, men who asked of the world nothing but leisure, books, and quiet. Their talk was of idioms and translations; they quarrelled over a word; they disputed over a doubtful reading. 'When,' says Erasmus, 'after a great deal of poring, they can spell out the inscription of some battered monument, Lord! what joy, what triumph!'

It was a mistake to expect of these men the active promotion of religious reform; but it was surely not absurd to expect that their influence would be at least in favour of it. In Italy, it is true, there had been abundant proofs of a wide-spread scepticism among scholars, which seemed to spring out of the new learning, and grow up side by side with it. But no signs of this had yet appeared in France. It remained for the new French scholars to import Italian doubt into their own country, and, with the pitiless logic of their race, to carry what in Italy was generally a scholarly scepticism and graceful suspense of opinion, to an open and scoffing infidelity.

No mind has more exercised the ingenuity of critics than that of Rabelais. Yet to us it seems that there is no writer of the day whose opinions

are more easily gathered than his, from his great work. The key to the whole is given in the fourth book, published a few days or weeks before his death, and in the fifth, or last, an imperfect book, not published till ten years later. Pass over, in order to get at his real faith, all the *grossièretés*, all the 'comic' stories, all the good sound educational advice, and all the personal satire; but read carefully the rules of the Monastery of Theleme, the description of the Isle Sonnante, the island of Grippeminaud, the Inquisitor, and the concluding words of the priestess: 'Depart, my friends, and may that intellectual sphere, whose centre is everywhere, and circumference nowhere, which we call GOD, help you in His almighty protection. When you return to the world, do not fail to affirm that the greatest treasures are hidden underground.'

Observe: it was not the business of Rabelais to be a religious teacher or reformer. He was, before all things, a man of science and a scholar. Several things, indeed, he desired ardently—that people should be allowed liberty of thought, expression, and investigation; that monasteries should be wholly abolished, or made places of culture; that learning should be respected in high places; that the ignorance of bigots should be kept in proper subjection; that the sciences of botany, anatomy, and medicine should be emancipated from the thrall of mediæval prejudices; that gentle manners should be taught to

high and low; that the follies of alchemists and astrologers should be duly exposed; and that those evils with which the world was then infected, foolish judges, cumbrous laws, greedy priests, pedantic scholars, might, by the aid of ridicule and satire, be scotched, if not killed. Rabelais was a *great social reformer*, but he was not a religious reformer. Was he careless about religion? He was more than careless—he was hostile to any existing form of religion. We have no doubt whatever that the names of Calvin and Luther were as unsavoury to Rabelais as that of the prejudiced, feverishly jealous, bigoted Doctor Beda. Had he, then, no belief? He had that belief which men in all ages contract who gather their religion from Nature alone. He saw in his plants, in the stars, in the human body, an Order so perfect and so wonderful that he needs must bow down and adore its Creator; he saw that Nature pours out her thousand forms of life in myriad profusion, reckless what became of each, and might have asked, with the poet—

> 'Are God and Nature then at strife,
> That Nature lends such evil dreams?
> So careful of the type she seems,
> So careless of the single life.'

He saw, further, that life, lavishly produced and as lavishly wasted, is ever being brought forth anew. From the dead body of the man, as well as of the insect, comes the nourishment which makes the

grasses rich, and helps to produce fresh life in a never-ceasing cycle. When he asked of Nature to tell him more, he was met with that cold silence which awaits all who dare question beyond the limit. The Secret of Life, the Secret of Death, the Great Hereafter—these things are denied to philosophers; only partially, indeed, revealed to Christians. All things are possible for science to discover, save only these two—Whence and Whither. Rabelais refused to look in that place where an answer is given to the second, and remained an infidel. So that when Calvin urged him to take his part in the great struggle of the day, he answered by a gibe of derision. It was the same gibe that he had for the orthodox—*for he hated them all.* And no man in France, excepting Voltaire, ever has had, or probably ever will have, anything like the influence of Rabelais; for his books were like text-books, read, re-read, almost committed to memory. Further, among his own friends and disciples were all the leaders and writers of the day—the great Du Bellay family, Marot, Dolet, Lyon Jamet, Maurice Scève, Salel, and the rest—and, remembering all this, can we doubt that the indifference to religion which has been for two hundred years a characteristic of modern France, rising sometimes to general and national infidelity, is largely due to the influence of Rabelais, and the balls which he first set rolling?

We mention the name of Clement Marot, im-

portant here chiefly for the influence he *might have had*. For he translated the Psalms into French verse, put them to tunes, and set the Court singing them. Let us think for a moment what England owes to those sweet and simple hymns which it is our godly fashion to sing in the churches and in the homes from earliest childhood, and which form a link to connect our religion with our daily life. Let us only try to think what we should be without these. And then give praise to Marot, for it was he who gave to France what should have been the foundation and beginning of a national book of praise and service of song, had not the bigots, the stupid mischievous bigots, stopped the singing because they pretended to see heresy in the words—David's words. And France is without hymns to this day.

We must here say a word in remonstrance with Marot's latest biographer, Professor Henry Morley. When a writer begins by declaring that he has 'long wished the truth to be told' about Marot, one has a right to expect something new. But he gives us nothing new. From beginning to end of his work there is not a fact which has not already been set down by M. Charles d'Héricault in that truly admirable and careful life of the poet prefixed to his edition of the poems. While the book is padded with superfluous details of political events, and with translations which have somehow all the

spirit of the original dropped out, the Professor's object seems to be to prove that Marot was a great Protestant. But the promised truth about Marot—is it this, after all? It is not as we apprehend it. Marot was a poet of the Court, a flatterer by profession, a man of kindly heart, impulsive and thoughtless speech, keen sensibilities, and the sweetest, most tender, most delightful, most natural versifier that France ever had. To please his mistress, Margaret, and because it suited his unsettled fancies, which were of course in favour of religious liberty, he followed her example in satire of monks and praise of a religious life. To please his other friends, and perhaps himself, he wrote verses of a quite different character. Witness those two celebrated *blasons* of his—the first of that collection of *blasons* on woman, where the French poets in a body gave free play to every licentious and impure thought. This precious contribution to literature was commenced by Clement Marot, who rejoiced exceedingly in seeing it grow and wax fuller and fuller till there was nothing possible left to add. He, too, is the poet who wasted that graceful lament, which Spenser imitated ('Shepheardes Calendar,' Ægloga Undecima), on Loyse, mother of Francis I.:

'Dido is gone afore: whose turne shall be the next?
There lives she with the blessed gods in blisse,
There drinks she nectar with ambrosia mixed,
And joyes enjoyes that mortal men doe misse.'

Dido—the worst woman of her time in France, as Marot very well knew—the licentious mother of a licentious son, whom good Queen Anne would not receive, and for whose evil sake she long refused to marry her daughter Claude to the heir of the throne. Marot again is the poet who, when he fled to Geneva for refuge, would have been imprisoned, perhaps executed, for immorality, had he not fled secretly, and gone elsewhere. Marot's religion was of a very *undogmatic* kind. In his preface to his version of the 'Romance of the Rose,' he pays his homage to the Virgin; when he is imprisoned for something said or written, he loudly exclaims that he is not a Lutheran or a Calvinist; when he comes back from Italy, he tries, unsuccessfully, to ingratiate himself with orthodoxy by translating the Psalms; and then, when this fails, takes his budget to Geneva, where they became for two hundred years and more the hymn-book of the Reformers. A light-hearted, free-living, sweet-natured man, a mere butterfly as regards opinions, but with a wholesome tendency to freedom and light; a man of doubtful morals, no scholar, a writer with a keen sense of fun and humour, a poet who saw in the greasy dirty monk the most delightful subject possible for his pen; and a man who, when he got into trouble, was ready to perform any amount of grovelling necessary to get himself out. A Liberal, because his friends were of that school, and because they used him to write

verses on their side; but not a religious reformer, *because not a religious man.* It cannot be too strongly insisted upon that no religious change, no lasting religious movement is possible, save where the leaders are themselves profoundly penetrated with real religion. Such men were Luther, Calvin, Latimer, Hooper, and others of the time. Such, too, were some of those Frenchmen who chose to remain in their church, as Lefevre and Roussel. But such was not Rabelais, nor Marot, nor the two men of whom we proceed to speak.

And, first, of Etienne Dolet, whose life and character we have always been surprised, since first we made acquaintance with the man, that no student of modern history has taken up. One French writer, of more zeal than wisdom, has devoted ten years of his life to producing an *éloge* upon him, for which he painfully collected all the facts of the case. It is not, however, the life of Etienne Dolet which has yet to be written. Let us here do a little to resuscitate the memory of a most unfortunate man and most noble scholar.

His parentage was quite unknown. He was born at Orleans about 1509. Somebody, we do not know who, enabled him to obtain the rudiments of a liberal education. That meant a good deal of Latin, with little or no Greek. At the age of twelve he went to Paris, where he attended the lectures of Nicolas Berauld. It is significant that Berauld was

also tutor to that Cardinal Odet de Coligny, Bishop of Beauvais, who went over to the Reformed cause, and publicly married Elizabeth de Hauteville. Berauld was also a friend of Erasmus. For four years young Dolet lived on Cicero, made Cicero's thoughts his own, Cicero's style his model, and learned to look up to Cicero with an admiration which never flagged. Then he managed somehow —the ways of mediæval students are mysterious—to get to Italy, where he sat for three years at the feet of Simon de Villeneuve, at Padua, removing thence to Venice, to follow the lectures of Baptiste Egnajio, still always working at Cicero. Here he had the great luck to get the protection of Jean du Bellay, a member of that noble family which deserved so well of France in the sixteenth century—soldiers, statesmen, churchmen, scholars, and poets. At Venice he fell in love with a certain Helena, about whom he writes Horatian poems :

'Frustra, Venus, mihi jecur tentas novo
Igne ; ad tuas obdurui
Flammas ; nihil tecum mihi isto tempore
Commune certe est. Impetus
Cæcæ juventæ dum ferebat et calor
Ætatis effrenæ, tuis
Plus forte quam castum decebat parui
Jussis ; fuit gratum improbo
Amore vinci.'

One rather suspects the genuineness of the passion when a young man at twenty talks of the fervour of

youth; but, after all, it seemed Horatian, which was what he chiefly cared for. And as for Helena, she probably had as real an existence as Dulcinea del Toboso, who was flourishing at about the same period, *l'ornement de la terre*, or as Horace's own Lalage.

From Venice he went to Toulouse to study law. And here the troubles of his life began. Toulouse, which had the same reputation for law which Montpelier possessed for medicine, divided its scholars into 'nations,' like all mediæval universities. We hear, for instance, of French, Aquitanians, and Spaniards. Every nation had its captain, and once a year, on the day of its saint, the nation held a *fête*, at which the captain pronounced an oration. Unluckily for young Dolet, he was elected captain of the French nation, and still more unluckily, the Parliament of Toulouse, for some wise reasons now unknown, chose that very year for suppressing the *fête*. The 'nation' resolved to hold its festival in spite of all the Parliaments, and Dolet was urged to deliver the oration as usual. It was certainly a fine opportunity for a young man to display that Ciceronian learning which it had taken him so much pains in the course of his *cæca juventa* to acquire. It was an occasion at once for the display of Latinity, eloquence, and righteous indignation, and in making the most of it Dolet's *début dans la vie* was as unlucky as that young fellow's in Balzac's novel. For, exalting his

molehill of a grievance to a very mountain, he prepared an oration into which he poured all his available stock of invective, sarcasm, and simulated rage — and then went and delivered it. Nothing could be more unreal than this youthful effusion of pretended patriotism, which is still preserved. It breathes the righteous wrath of Cicero against Catiline, and while its periods are balanced after the style of that great model, it is more fearless, more bitter, more unsparing. In other words, it is the work of a conceited and thoughtless youth, eager to show his cleverness. Again, not content with attacking the Parliament, he must needs air his crude liberalism in theology, and attack the Toulousians for having burnt Caturce, the professor of theology, the year before. A man might commit any sin in those days, and it would be forgiven him, because people were kind-hearted and the law was uncertain. But let him beware how he touched the Church. For the Church never forgave. Were it in a moment of madness, were it under provocation too intense for suppression, were it as a mere child, the offender would never be safe from the resentment of the offended ; while resentment among theologians meant the stake.

He was soon enough made to feel his mistake, and, though he never again dared to lift up his voice and declare his opinions, the fatal oration pursued him through life. It was, indeed, full of materials for an

enemy to fasten upon. He spoke in favour of free thought, and the study of Plato and Cicero.

'What!' he asks, 'shall our students leave the society of scholars for that of barbarians? . . . shall they prefer primitive savagery to the free thought which creates man afresh? . . . Have the grossness of the Scythians and the monstrous barbarity of the Getæ made irruption into this town only to help the human pests which inhabit it to hate, persecute, and vilify holy thought? . . . That sacred fire of mutual love which nature incessantly kindles in our hearts, they have longed to extinguish; that fraternity which the gods themselves inspire they have wished to stifle; that right of free reunion which every sympathy accords to us, they have wished to annihilate.'

He was mad enough even to attack the superstitions of the place, the customs peculiar to Toulouse—of galloping nine times round the church, of plunging the host on certain days into the Garonne, of offering up prayers to the river, of carrying wooden images of saints round the town in times of drought, and so on.

A young man wise in his generation would at least have sat down to count the cost of making enemies of a whole town. But Dolet was not wise. The students applauded him, and he was happy, until the next morning brought reflection, repentance, and the officers of justice. To prison he must go, while the people hooted and howled at him, tried to murder him, spread abroad infamous libels respecting him, and carried about the streets a pig, which they labelled

'Dolet,' and solemnly tortured and burned. This is the first of that long series of imprisonments which made Floridus, the Italian scholar, author of the *Apologia in Plauti . . . calumniatores*, call a prison 'patria Doleti.'

How long he was confined we have no means of telling, but probably not many days. Good-natured Bishop Dupin helped him in his strait, pleading youth and hot-headedness, and his great genius — 'juvenis est rarâ et excellenti quâdam ingenii bonitate præditus.' But he seems first to have had to perform the *amende honorable*, for he says himself:

> 'Nullum me scelus in vincula conjici
> Poscebat, neque per compita turpiter
> Duci, ut qui impius ense
> Patris foderit ilia.'

Toulouse was no longer any place for him. He got out of it secretly, and made his way to Lyons, arriving there in a melancholy condition of mind and body, and without a friend.

At this time there was no better place in the world for a man of advanced opinions and of scholarship than the city of Lyons. Among the authors and students who formed the celebrated society called 'l'Angélique' were the Scève family, consisting of Maurice, poet, antiquary, artist, architect, and musician, and his sisters Claudine and Sybille, also poets; Symphorien Champiry, who passed a long and vainglorious life in studies of

medicine and history; Benoît, court lawyer and botanist, who wrote commentaries on Martial's 'Arrêts d'Amour'; and Matthieu de Vaugelles, magistrate and writer on law, brother to Jeane de Vaugelles, *maître des requêtes* under Margaret of Navarre, and friend of Marot. This society maintained a spirit of free inquiry which, while it led some too far, and brought ruin upon one at least of their number, undoubtedly did much to keep back that great wave of ignorance and bigotry which was perpetually threatening France during this century; and, though the society was not devoted to religious reform, every member was a marked man by the orthodox, and each, in peril of accusations false or true, *coluit per mille pericula musas.*

Here Dolet found a friend who stood by him faithfully in the printer Gryphe, who published his orations and epigrams for him. Gryphe (Gryphæus) was one of that illustrious band of printers who, in the first century of the invention, devoted themselves to the noble profession with the zeal and ardour of artists. He it was who published the Latin Bible of 1550, an edition in the largest type yet produced, remarkable for the few errors and the clearness of the character. The list of works issued from his press amounts to nearly three hundred. Vulteius said of him:

'Castigat Stephanus, sculpsit Colinæus, utrumque
Gryphius edoctâ mente manuque facit.'

His device was, 'Virtute duce, fortunâ comite.' He printed, in 1536, Dolet's great work, 'Commentarii Linguæ Latinæ,' a two-volume folio of 1,800 columns each, with but eight errata for the whole work. Charles Fontaine, the author of 'La Contr'amye de Court,' and friend of Clement Marot, wrote an epitaph for Gryphe :

> 'La grand' griffe qui tout griffe,
> A griffé le corps de Gryphe ;
> Le corps de ce Gryphe ; mais
> Non le los, non, non, jamais.'

Then came the grand quarrel of the Ciceronians, Dolet being peaceably housed in Lyons, correcting, probably, for the press, and spending every spare moment on his commentaries. Erasmus's 'Ciceronians' appeared in 1528. In 1531 came Scaliger's celebrated diatribe, to which Erasmus replied only by saying that it could not be the work of Scaliger. Six years later came Scaliger's second 'Discourse,' Erasmus being by this time dead. To the amazement of Scaliger, who considered that when he had once spoken no more was to be said on his side, Dolet had in 1535 also written a 'Discourse' against Erasmus. Scaliger flew into the most violent rage, declaring that Dolet had stuffed his work full of his own arguments, storming because he had presumed to write 'exstantibus scriptis meis,' and calling him by such choice epithets as *Musarum carcinoma aut vomica*, and *ignavus locutuleius*. Even a Hindoo,

accustomed as he is to the facile cursing of his own tongue, would turn pale and shudder at the swearing of Scaliger in wrath. So here was another enemy. We do not intend to detail the course of this precious quarrel, in which Floridus and Ramus also took part. It lasted for thirty years, ending in the triumph of the Ciceronians, whose cause has retained its position to the present day.

This, however, was recreation to Dolet. He went on, meanwhile, with his massive labours, and already held the greatest reputation as a scholar. He is spoken of by Vulteius as a man 'of colossal patience, of generous ardour, of divine genius, the scientific torch of our age, the eternal glory of France.' He was bald at thirty-six, the effect of incessant labour.

> 'Pertulit et multos æstus, et frigora multa ;
> Abstinuit somno sæpe, ciboque libens ;
> Viveret ut famâ celebri post fata Doletus ;
> Quas natura negat, sic cumulantur opes.'

Indeed, it is saddening to look back at the mighty labours of these sixteenth-century scholars. They aimed at glory—the glory of posterity ; they worked on, by night and day, through health and sickness, through poverty and misery, happy only if their books and papers were left to them, careless of the pleasure that this world has to offer, indifferent to the world to come. In their ardour for learning, they pictured to themselves the world of the future

eager in reading Cicero, writing no language but pure Latin, no poetry but Latin verse, knowing no art that Horace and Terence could not teach, honouring no men but themselves, the great pioneers of learning. Science was nothing—good for a man like Andrew Vesalius, who actually spent his days in dissecting dead men's bodies, while he might have been dissecting dead men's written thoughts; good for a man like Rabelais, who was always pulled in opposite directions by medicine and scholarship. Religion meant trying to burn those who studied Greek. There was nothing to delight, nothing to comfort, nothing to imitate and admire, but the works of the great men of old.

And yet their lives were not happy. They offered their all to the new-made idol, but got nothing in return. Hear what Dolet himself says:

'To attain to the glory of the ancients, one condition only is necessary—the ancient liberty of thought and the prospect of honour. What we want is love, liberality, and courtesy from the powerful to the learned: the favours of a Mæcenas as the stimulus to study; a sort of republic which will hold out the palm to the eyes of talent, and decree praises capable of rousing natures the least disposed to letters, and inflaming more and more those devoted to them. On the other hand, the ardour for study is checked by the contempt which it meets, and the laugh of derision which pursues the champion of progress. At the end of a studious career no recompense awaits us. What do I say? no recompense? No hope. It is to drag along a life without

honour; to swallow a thousand insults; to cringe before tyranny; and often, in treading the dangerous paths of literature, you are walking in a perpetual ambush. . . . But now men have learned to know themselves; now their eyes are opened to the universal light; while hitherto, covered with darkness, they have shut themselves up in a complete and deplorable blindness . . . if only the envy of certain barbarians, strangers to every kind of education, raged no longer against letters and their servants; if our soil was purged of all these human pests—what more could we wish for the happiness of our age?'

When he was about twenty-five, he had the bad luck to kill a man in self-defence, who wanted to murder him—one does not know why. Prison again. But this time the king released him from the 'patria Doleti,' and he went back to his studies.

It was in 1537 that he obtained permission to print, for a period of ten years, all books which he might either annotate, revise, or write himself. A great and noble privilege, but a dangerous one, for it laid the recipient open to a hundred malicious tricks at the hands of the orthodox party, his enemies, and proved in the end the ruin of Dolet. He adopted as his device, for Latin books, 'Durior est spectatæ virtutis quam incognitæ conditio,' and for French books, the prophetic prayer, 'Preserve moy, O Seigneur, des calomnies des hommes.'

Among his friends at this period are all the best men in France—Guillaume du Bellay, to whom he dedicates one of his works, and Archbishop Jean du

Bellay, *par nobile fratrum*; Rabelais, about whom he writes a very curious set of verses, supposed to be spoken by a dead criminal whom that great surgeon had dissected; Clement Marot, who writes of him:

'Le noble esprit de Cicero romain,
Voyant ça bas mainct cerveau foible et tendre,
Trop maigrement avoir myz plume en main
Pour de ses dictz la force faire entendre,
Laissa le ciel en terre, se vint rendre,
Au corps entra de Dolet.'

He printed Marot's complete works, with the consent of the author, in 1539. But they quarrelled afterwards, and Marot wrote bitter epigrams against his old friend, even prophesying, the most cruel blow of all, that the glory he laboured for would not be his:

'Et, non obstant tes gros tomes divers,
Sans bruict mourras. Cela est arresté.'

Another of his associates was the learned and elegant Salmon, called, from his leanness, Macrin, one of the king's *valets-de-chambre*, who addressed him in laudatory verses, worthy of his nickname of the French Horace. We hear nothing of any intimacy with the leaders of Queen Margaret's little party, Roussel, Lefevre, and the rest. Clearly Dolet had no sympathy with the religious questions of the day; and, although he seems to have been careful not to write anything which might bring the

Sorbonne upon him, it is very clear that he was recognised as a private scoffer, and the friend of dangerous persons.

In 1542 the inquisition at Lyons, the chief inquisitor being that Matthieu Dory whom Rabelais calls 'nostre maistre Doribus,' declared the unfortunate scholar 'maulvais, scandaleux, schismatique, hérétique, fauteur et deffenseur des hérésies et erreurs.'

He defended himself vigorously against these charges, declared that he never had published, and never intended to publish, anything against the laws of the Church. As to a charge of eating flesh in Lent—it was the commonest way of the free-thinkers to express their opinions, and the charge was always brought against them—he had done so by the doctor's orders and the advice of a priest.

Notwithstanding his protests, he was in durance for fifteen months, and only came out to witness, by order of the Parliament of Paris, the burning of his epigrams, and twelve other books, some of which had been printed by himself. But his enemies were resolved on his destruction. Only a few months after his release, his enemies got hold of a packet of heretical books, printed in Geneva or elsewhere, and, stamping the name of Dolet upon them, caused them to be seized as his. He was arrested again, but this time managed to get away, and fled across the mountains to Piedmont. Observe that he did

not, like Marot, who had his bundle of Psalms to show, go to Geneva. Here he resolved at first to stay till the storm should blow over, but his scholarly eagerness getting the better of his prudence, he returned secretly, and tried to print off his 'Hipparchus.' He was caught again, this time not to be released at all. The Church was about to avenge herself. The zealous hands of Master Doribus and his allies soon found materials for the charge of atheism against him. It was enough that he had printed in one of his books a phrase from Plato: 'After death there shall be no longer anything.' Nothing more was needed. He was sentenced to be burned with his books, but before his death to be put to the torture. After weary months of prison, the hapless scholar was led forth, on August 3rd, 1546, to meet his terrible death. He thought the crowd lamented him as he walked to the stake, and turned to the priest, saying—

'Non Dolet ipse dolet, sed pia turba dolet,'

being at least classical to the last.

They offered him an alternative when he was tied up among his faggots. If he would recite a prayer after the priest he would be strangled before burning. If he refused, his tongue was to be cut out by the roots, and his body burned alive. He yielded, and saying after the priest, 'Mi Deus, quem toties offendi, propitius esto; teque Virginem

Mariam precor, divumque Stephanum, ut apud Dominum pro me peccatore intercedatis,' was strangled and then burned, the greatest scholar that France had yet produced, one of the greatest in Europe, the friend of all the new school, a printer of the highest reputation, a poet, and a wit.

So Dolet died, martyr to a classical turn. Scaliger, his enemy, was base enough to rejoice, and said brutally that his impiety had even tainted the fire which consumed him. His friends in France, afraid for themselves, were only too glad to hold their tongues. There was no telling who had not quoted a phrase of Cicero's, and passed it off as a coin of their own making, or at least of their own approval. Beza alone, who was no longer in France, ventured to express his sorrow and indignation at the judicial murder which robbed France of so great a scholar. Yet, among all men of either religion, there was but one opinion—Dolet was an atheist. They exulted at his death :

> 'Mortales animas gaudebas dicere pridem ;
> Nunc immortales esse, Dolete, doles.'

Calvin classed him with Agrippa and Servetus as a disbeliever in a future state. All who knew him accused him of holding blasphemous opinions, though as to what these were they do not explain. We must remember that his love and admiration for the classics led him to imitate their phraseology,

even on points where his own opinions were, perhaps, the contrary. Thus he says, being twenty-one years of age :

> 'Ne mortis horre spicula quæ dabit
> *Sensu carere*'—

no doubt thinking that he was intensely Horatian ; while, writing in defence of himself, he says : 'What sentence of mine is there which contains the very least suspicion of impiety—I mean an opinion as to the mortality of the soul ?' To his son he writes :

> 'In nobis cælestis origo
> Est quædam, post cassa manens, post cassa superstes
> Corpora et æterno se commotura vigore
> . . . . .
> . . . sunt nobis reditus ad regna paterna
> Regna Dei genus unde animi duxere perennes.'

This does not look like a belief in annihilation. At the same time we find, *per contra*, the following :

> 'Vivens vidensque gloriâ meâ frui
> Volo : nihil juvat mortuum
> Quod vel diserté scripserit vel fecerit
> Animosé.'

Dolet's views as to a future world must be sought not in the Bible, not in his own writings, but in Cicero. What Cicero believed, the scholars believed ; and all apparent contradiction is entirely removed when we read the first book of the 'Tusculan Dis-

putations.' This book, which treats, as everybody knows, of death and a future life, seems ever present in the minds of those scholars who came immediately after the Renaissance. It haunts their writings; it furnishes them with a creed, with a consolation, with a hope.

'Nam si supremus ille dies non exstinctionem sed commutationem affert loci, quid optabilius? Sin autem perimit ac delet omnino, quid melius quam in mediis vitæ laboribus obdormiscere et ita conniventem somno consopiri sempiterno? . . . Nos vero si quid tale acciderit, ut a deo denuntiatum videatur, ut exeamus à vitâ læti, et agentes gratias pareamus, emittique nos e custodia et levari vinculis arbitremur, ut aut in æternam, et plane in nostram domum remigremus, aut omni sensu molestia careamus.'

While Rabelais looked to Nature for his religion, and found nothing but the universal order, and Dolet looked to Cicero for his, and found nothing but the cold alternative, there was another man, of lesser fame, who was following both. He, too, was a worshipper of Nature; he, too, bowed down and grovelled before the wisdom of the ancients; but he, not content to keep his opinions to himself, must needs rush into the field, and, like a soldier who foolishly throws away his life by a mad attempt at heroism, ruined himself, and did no good to anybody.

Des Periers could not sit down with Dolet and contemn the world, nor could he laugh at it with

Rabelais. He must work—must do something to help on the machine, even though it is moving in the right direction. He belonged to that class of enthusiasts who are also largely endued with personal vanity. In modern times he would have scorned to stay with those who shout below the platform, and would have pushed himself to the front among the speakers. You may see these men everywhere —at May meetings, at political gatherings, at a village caucus. They come to the front in troublous times. They are men of positive opinions, only incapable of seeing that they, too, may be wrong, or perhaps but half right; they have weight because they are honest; they influence the world because they so evidently believe what they say. But they are perilous friends, and they more often do harm than good. Their zeal carries them beyond discretion, and while they would die rather than betray a trust, they overdo a duty.

The scholars held their opinions in secret. You might find those of Dolet, as we have done, here and there among his writings, or among the works of Cicero. So, too, with Rabelais. The books of his great work, published in his lifetime, might excite suspicion, but not certainty. Calvin, for instance, never quite read the mind of Rabelais. It was not till the last book was published that the key was given, and the mind of the man made known. So that when people understood what

Rabelais really had to say to them, the writer was safely dead and buried; only his influence was tenfold deeper than that of anybody else could be, because his books were all known by heart.

Des Periers could not bear this secrecy and reserve. Therefore, in the blindness of his enthusiasm and conceit, he published the 'Cymbalum Mundi.'

He was one of those young Frenchmen who, like Etienne Dolet and so many more, were led by their ardour for Greek and Latin to abandon the beaten paths of war and law, and devote themselves to study under the patronage of whatever great man they could find. He was lucky so far, that he gained the friendship of Margaret, who made him one of her *valets-de-chambre*, private secretaries, and literary advisers. In this triple capacity he lived about her court, both in Paris and Navarre, writing, studying, and meditating. He wrote translations, poems, and tales—such tales as we find in the 'Heptameron.' His verses are touched with a melancholy that is not without its charm, though the thoughts are commonplace enough. Take, for example, the following lines on the flight of time—not so good as Herrick's 'Gather ye Rosebuds while ye may'—verbose even, but still pathetic:

'The rose that yesterday the sun's bright rays
Dwelt on so fondly, with a lover's gaze,
For whose dear sake he lingered in the sky,
This morning—see—the same sun passes by

Withered and wasted—all its beauty fled ;
And that which seemed eternal lost and dead.
But if the flowers, so full of tender grace,
Have in this world so sad and brief a race,
Since the same day which painted them at morn
Beats down their beauty ere the next is born—
And evening pilfers what at noon was fair—
And yet each lives its life and blossoms there
Its one appointed day ;—young maids, do you
Gather in time the roses wet with dew,
Before the sunset comes to lay them low ;
But think, meantime, that our life passes so :
Death is our evening, and our heyday goes,
With all our beauty, even as the rose.'

These verses were written in the brief and happy time—about ten years in all—which he spent in the service of Margaret. It was his own heyday, destined to pass away like the rose. The secretaries of Margaret had little official work to do: two or three hours a day spent in correcting her manuscripts, answering her questions, discussing her problems, and the rest to themselves. Des Periers was a man avid of pleasure, wherever he could get it—perhaps unrestrained by any scruples of conscience—and equally avid of study. But, as the outcome of all his religious musings and discussions, he found himself at last far estranged from the principles with which he had begun, separated by a wide gulf from that limpid atmosphere of pure thought and rapt mysticism in which his gentle patron sat, surrounded by her friends. Probably,

in some incautious, reckless mood he would let the secret of his infidelity be seen. On no other ground can we understand the neglect in which Margaret afterwards allowed him to linger. Evil times fell upon France, accelerated by the business of the blasphemous placards of 1534. One can hardly believe the Reformers, with all their zeal, capable of this act so fatal, so suicidal. 'Your Christ,' said these ultra-Protestant papers, 'allows himself to be eaten by beasts, as well as by yourselves, who are more than beasts in the mockeries you make around your God of paste, playing with it like a cat with a mouse.' Other outrages had been committed before this. In 1528 the statue of the Virgin in the Rue des Rosiers had been mutilated. This led to the burning of Louis de Berquin. There had been placards, like electioneering squibs, on both sides, leading to endless quarrels and recriminations. Thus, the Sorbonists wrote the ballad which has been preserved, beginning:

'Au feu, au feu cest hérésye
Qui jour et nuyt trop nous grève!
Doibz-tu souffrir qu'elle moleste
Sainte escripture et ses esdictz?
Veulx tu bannir science parfaite
Pour soubstenir lutheriens mauldictz?
Crains tu point Dieu qu'il permette
Toy et les tiens,' etc., etc.

These exercises of the satirical muse brought about the banishment of that agitator and bigot

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Beda, and the Protestants had a short respite. And then, while all seemed to promise well for them, in the midst of their brightening prospects, came the placards. Surely it may be permitted to suspect that the Catholics themselves—*i.e.*, some of their leaders—devised this notable plot to confound their enemies. It was not the act of one or two men, but an organized conspiracy, because they were not only put up in Paris, but also at Blois—on the doors of the castle where the king was holding his court, and elsewhere.

And then a great fear fell upon the reformers, and every one fled, seeking shelter where it might be found. Amyot got safely away to Bourges, Marot to the Duchess of Ferrara; others to Geneva and Strasburg: for Francis I. was fairly roused to wrath, and swore that he would burn every heretic in France, even if it were his own son. The King of Navarre, in alarm for himself, actually boxed his wife's ears for disputing with a Lutheran—the heretic getting away by the back staircase. And at this very juncture Des Periers, thinking in his conceit that the general confusion would be a capital opportunity for showing himself superior to everybody, must needs indite and publish his 'Cymbalum Mundi.' Most men, wise men, would have said, 'Here is a time to be silent: to attract as little attention as possible: to make no noise at all till the storm blows over.' But Des

Periers was not a wise man, and so he brought out his fatal work. It was printed anonymously, not even he daring to put his name to it, in Paris, where it was suppressed forthwith. And now again the wise man would have seen that silence for a space was the truest road to gaining a hearing at last. But no; Des Periers had it reprinted in Lyons. Margaret knew not only the nature of the work but the name of the author. She sent him from her in disgrace. When, some time after, he wrote a pitiful letter asking her help, she gave him a hundred livres and refused any further assistance. The hundred livres were spent: what was to be done? The pleasant old circle of friends and philosophers was broken up. Rabelais was with the Roi d'Yvetot, in Normandy; Marot was in Piedmont, at the point of death; Dolet was already in prison, waiting for a cruel fate cruelly delayed; Roussel was scandalized at his infidelity; from Switzerland he could hope for nothing; from France nothing. What could he do? A pagan of the ancient philosophical type, he could think of but one thing, to end the struggle as Cato did. He ran a sword through his body, and no one, not a soul, unless it might be some poor woman's heart, mourned for him when he died. For all said that it was just the end to be expected of so wicked a man and so great an enemy of religion.

The heretic, whatever his opinions might be, could

always find some shelter among the people who thought with him; there must be for every one, somewhere, a sympathetic circle, if only strong enough to strengthen him under torture, so that he might not feel wholly deserted and alone. The courtly scoffer could dwell at ease under the very shadow of the Vatican — sometimes under the scarlet hat, or even under the triple crown; if troublesome times came, he was always ready to hold his tongue and conform outwardly, and he would be sure to have plenty of friends. But there were no friends for Des Periers.

A Voltairean before the days when it was possible for a Voltaire to live; a man wholly stripped — and openly stripped, which was much more important — of sympathy with the religious feelings of the time; not a scoffer only, with a sort of secret higher belief, but a scorner of Christianity like that poor Italian scholar and madman of the tenth century — what could Des Periers do?

Fear of torture alone would hardly in those days make a man commit suicide. The crushed limbs, the twisted ankle, the broken thumb, might give a man a greater weight and position. The cause was helped by his own burning; the stake was all in the day's work, one of the possibilities of life, like the toothache—which Luther ascribed to direct Satanic agency; like hunger and other unpleasant accidents of the world. What in the case of Des Periers

made him prefer suicide to judicial death was the isolation and despair of his position. The atheist alone went out of the world without a friend; no sympathizing tear would drop for him on his way to death; no ray of hope would cheer him; friendless and deserted, he would have to pass through awful suffering, from a world which promised nothing but pain, but only a senseless annihilation, or the cold heaven of Cicero, to be floating in the air and watch the progress of things below. So the last act of Des Periers was consistent with his belief.

The 'Cymbalum Mundi' consists of four dialogues, two of which alone are important. Let us first indicate the general purport of these most remarkable and suggestive performances, and then supply the key by which they are to be explained.

In the first, Mercury comes down to the earth, sent by Jupiter to get his book of the Immortals, which is dropping to pieces, rebound. While Mercury is engaged in pilfering a silver image at the hostelry where he alights, two rascals make off with Jupiter's book, leaving in its place a ragged copy of the history of the god's amours. Mercury, without perceiving the theft, takes the work to the bookbinders. In the second dialogue, Mercury meets a company of philosophers, seeking for the philosopher's stone, which they say has been broken up and scattered about, but every little piece has all the virtues of the original perfect stone. They all claim to have found

pieces, but decline putting them to any test of their miraculous powers, and are perpetually quarrelling among themselves.

In the third dialogue, Mercury descends to earth once more in order to recover if possible his book of the Immortals, Jupiter having discovered the theft and substitution. It must be owned that he has taken the loss a great deal more mildly than Mercury had any right to expect. Meanwhile the thieves have been driving a roaring trade in selling the right of entering new names in the book of the Immortals. Mercury gets back the precious volume, and after performing a variety of miracles with it, such as making a horse talk, proceeds to execute the little commissions for the purchase of cosmetics, etc., entrusted to him by the goddesses, and returns to Olympus.

We first read these dialogues with a sense of weariness as well as astonishment. For Pasquin, in a letter to Etienne Tabouret, denounces them as a Lucianism which ought to be thrown into the fire, together with the author if he were yet alive. And Bayle, who did not understand everything, puts Rabelais and Des Periers together in the same category with Lucian, whose method of ridiculing religion he calls a bad one.

The key, however, was found in 1841 by M. Eloi Johanneau, and is so simple and obvious—quite a Columbus's egg—that one is astonished at one's

own stupidity in not hitting on it at first. For the book is a bitter and railing satire, under an allegory, not against Catholics or Protestants, but against Christianity itself. The doctrine taught in the 'Cymbalum Mundi' is that all those truths and lessons which we revere are to be found in old books — notably the Greek books; that the pretensions of our religion are false; its doctrines, so far as they are peculiar, are absurd; its history a foolish invention; the controversies rising out of it petty and trifling; and that, finally, truth, the only thing worth looking after, is as much to seek as ever.

Some of the names of the speakers are expressed by anagrams. Rhetulus is Luther; Cubercus is Bucer; Drarig stands for Girard — Gerard — Erasmus. And so far as these are concerned, it is not probable that the Sorbonne would have interfered, whatever blasphemy had been put into their mouths. But this was not all. Here we have a man, perhaps orthodoxly satirical against Protestants, but where is his zeal for the Church? Alas! nowhere discernible. No zeal at all, on the most careful search, can be made apparent. Where he is intelligible we find, clearly enough, railings at monks and nuns; where he is unintelligible, he is presumedly blasphemous. And so let the work be condemned.

Let us now give a few extracts from the book. Here is one from the second dialogue. The

speakers are Rhetulus, Çubercus, Drarig (see above), with a certain Trigabus, of whom anyone that can may give the real name, and Mercury. Trigabus accuses the god of deceit :

'What ! Did you not tell us you really had the philosopher's stone ? Did you not, when we quarrelled about it, break it up and grind it in pieces as small as the sand ? Further, did you not say that whoever found even a little piece of it should be able to perform miracles—to transmute metals, to break down bars, and open doors, to heal the sick—especially those who have nothing the matter with them ; to get whatever he might ask of the gods—always provided that it were a lawful thing to ask, and one which might easily happen, as fine weather after rain, flowers in spring, sunshine in summer, fruit in autumn, cold in winter—that, in fact, the lucky finder should be able to effect all this, and a great deal more ? Well, ever since you made that promise they have never ceased to dig up the sand of the theatre where you threw the pieces, in hopes of finding some of them. It is the finest pastime in the world to see them picking and sifting, and except for their fighting you would think them a lot of children making dirt pies.'

'And is there no one,' asks Mercury, 'who has found a piece ?'

'Not one. But every man thinks he has found a quantity ; so that if all which they exhibit were piled in a heap it would amount to ten times the original stone. Sometimes they throw away all they have got, and begin over again. A pleasant task you have set the world, Mercury ! . . . But you ought to see them tearing and quarrelling with each other. . . . One swears that in order to find it you must be dressed

in red and green; another that you must be dressed in yellow and blue. One says that you must not eat above six times a day; another that you may eat all day long if you like. One says that you may marry; another that you must not. One says that you must search with a candle; another, by the light of the sun. And in every court, street, temple, bakehouse, tavern, and barber's shop, there is nothing to be heard but their squabbling. . . . As for the pieces which have been found, they have as yet only served to turn men into chattering monkeys, swearing parrots, and asses fit only for bearing burdens and blows.'

Mercury thinks it would be amusing to go and see them. In order to effect a disguise, he transforms himself into an old man. This done, he makes his way with Trigabus to the theatre, where the philosophers are at work. These are our three friends, Luther, Bucer, and Erasmus, all quarrelling over the pieces they have found. Luther, who will not admit that anybody has obtained a single piece except himself, dashes those of Erasmus out of his hand and mixes them up in the sand again. Bucer, with characteristic moderation, remarks that out of sixteen pieces he carries about in a bag, he is quite certain of four, and has hopes of the remaining twelve. Mercury asks what they are doing, and he is duly informed of the qualities and powers of the fragments they are searching for.

'Very well,' says Mercury; 'all this being so, and as between you, you must have several pieces of the

stone, suppose, by the aid of one of them—mind, I do not ask you to use more than one piece—you enable your companion here to find those fragments rudely knocked out of his hand by Luther, about which he is making such a pother. Or, if you would do a kindness to a really poor man, you might only turn these silver coins—my little all—into gold ones.'

This request sets them all by the ears again. Bucer argues that so long a time having elapsed since the stone was broken up, its virtue must in a very great measure have gone out of it. Besides, he says that there is no necessity for the stone to show its virtue, because Mercury can take it away or put it back just as he pleases. 'If that is so,' objects Mercury, 'I see no reason for breaking your backs hunting for it.'

Then Luther charges impetuously into the dispute, declaring that the stone had all its original virtues, and that by its aid he himself can effect miracles. The transmutation of metals, for instance: have not hundreds who follow him found all their gold changed into lead? Then is it not harder to make men change their opinions than transmute metals? Has he not made men who used to give take to asking? has he not persuaded vestals to marry? and do they not so far believe in his philosopher's stone as to face death with courage in its defence?

Mercury laughs at the stone; tells them they are all fools together for their pains; that as for Mercury,

who is but the god of thieves, is it not more than possible that he broke up a common stone to deceive them all?

This is quite enough for an extract. Applying the key furnished by M. Johanneau, we have the meaning of what reads like an absurd rigmarole.

The philosopher's stone is Faith, of which a grain is sufficient to move mountains. The sand of the theatre where the searchers are at work is the Bible itself; when they do find the stone, they are either afraid to try its virtues, or they hide it away in a bag, or they put it to a bad use. Bucer says openly that his bits are no good at all; Luther boasts that he can turn gold into lead, which is true, because his followers so often come to penury. And Mercury, we are sorry to say, stands for Christ himself.

We have taken from the mass of scholars, poets, and writers of the time these three men as representatives. We have endeavoured to show what their individual opinions were. It must be borne in mind that two, at least, were men of the greatest weight and influence. One wrote a book which became familiar in men's mouths as household words. Of its meaning, purpose, and aims—which were perfectly grave and serious—there could be, and was, no doubt at all. Nor can there be, we think, any doubt as to its success. It destroyed earnestness in France. It found men craving for

a better faith, and it left them doubting whether any system in the world could give it them. Great and noble as are many of the passages in Rabelais; profoundly wise as he was, we yet believe that no writer who ever lived inflicted such lasting injury upon his country. While nothing in literature can be more touching than the natural philosopher's plea for science, the scholar's plea for education, the persecuted monk's plea for freedom, so nothing can be more saddening than the last chapters in the old man's book, which even he was afraid to publish, containing the enigma whose answer is an avowal of atheism. What chance had the earnestness of Luther in France when the mockery and doubt of Rabelais had seized upon the country?

And so also with Dolet. Among French scholars he was the first, but among French reformers he was the last. For the men and women of the world—for their ignorance, their credulity—he had nothing but contempt; for their religion, nothing but hatred. What response could the pleadings of a Paul awaken in hearts that were moved by nothing but Cicero?

Poor hot-headed Des Periers represents the effect of such leaders upon their immediate disciples. His book stands alone, it is true; but no man's opinions stand alone. We gather them from the books we read, the same which all read; from the men we talk with, the same with whom all talk; from the

atmosphere we breathe, the same which all breathe. The same conditions of life and education produced a Rabelais and a Roussel, but they failed to produce a Luther.

We said at the beginning that St. Bartholomew's Day did not kill the Reformation. That was killed already. It killed what was left of the political strength after the religious strength had gone out of it. The weavers of Meaux, the poor artizans of Paris, the countrymen of Provence, these formed the real strength of the French Reformers. But the Du Bellays and the Châtillons—the men who first stood in the front—had none of the earnestness which turns a Revolt into a Revolution, a Protest into a Reformation. Or, if they had it at first, it was choked in the bud by Rabelais.

Happily we have nothing like this in our English history. Our men were terribly, deeply in earnest. Put Latimer in the place of Roussel; Ridley for Briçonnet; Hooper for Lefevre; take away the scholars with their Italian infidelity; leave Marot's Psalms to warm the people's hearts; substitute Elizabeth for Catherine de Medici, and say what might have been the future of France!

[1875.]

THÉOPHILE DE VIAU

THERE are some poets, the peculiar sport of Fortune in that capricious mood of hers when she delights in heaping misfortunes on a single head, who are also, for some intrinsic quality, the delight of all mankind. Their works, which they proudly believed would last all time, turn out in the sequel, perhaps, but a shingle monument in painted wood, destined to drop slowly to pieces and disappear; at best only reprinted to complete a collection or to please an enthusiast. But they themselves live longer than their books. Their misfortunes and their faults lend to their lives that touch of the picturesque which is wanting in the histories of well-regulated minds. Byron's troubles throw a lurid colour upon his verse, falling across it like the side-lights in some old cathedral. Chatterton's poetry is clean gone; but we think of his shattered life and that picture of a deathbed where the moonlight covers the lonely corpse like a silvery sheet. The man who has the best chance of being forgotten is the good man, the prudent, the righteous, the

quiet, and the self-denying. Who, for instance, cares to know much about the personal history of Wordsworth, over whose life and letters we actually yawn? Putting the scrapes and reprehensible behaviour aside, it does seem as if the cold and wintry glory which consists in taking rank as a great writer is a poor thing compared with that inexplicable power which some men, second-rate perhaps in genius, have of drawing towards them the hearts of men while they live, and of keeping that love alive after they themselves are dead. It is a power not easy to understand. So there are some women, not by any means the most beautiful, who have the power through all their lives of making the hearts of the foolish sex to glow and their silly eyes to soften.

Certain writers are like these ladies; they make the world love them. The strongest element of this mesmeric power is undoubtedly the possession of sympathy. We love, first of all, those whom we believe to be thinking about us—it is the root of a child's affection; and afterwards we love those for whom we think and work. They abuse the world's affection, many of our poets; they run amuck among all the moralities; the simplest snares of the Crafty One catch and entrap them; and the world loves them still. I, for my own part, am never tired of reading about them. And then, besides, we love the spectacle of a man so different from the rest

of the world, and yet so strangely like it; who has no backbone of principle; who is not subjected to the laws and restraints of ordinary humanity; who seems provided with wings by which to leap carelessly over the hedges set for us by a Decalogue; who is able to laugh to scorn that first great law that no man shall eat unless he work, now modified by the codicil of civilization—unless he have money left him. You know how one laughs when a clever contortionist throws about lawless legs in a way which shows them to be independent of the restraints of structural anatomy. It would never do, we feel, to attempt these gambols ourselves. For us the only method is a decorous walk, and, while our poets revel in the flowery fields all aglow with buttercups, we trudge along the dusty highway; we look over the hedge and sigh; but go on all the same bethinking us of the dreadful things we have heard. For gentlemen with talons and claws and cats-o'-nine-tails await the reveller when he reaches the end of the leafy avenue. It is but human to dream of things that cannot be ours: there are moments for every man when he thinks of that fair city of Corinth, which, as we know, it is not given to every man to enter. What is it like, to those who have the golden key? Surely not like the decorous suburb of Clapham; surely not like anything we know. There must be perpetual lightness of heart there; laughter fresh and spontaneous;

never-ending dances; Offenbachian operas, music that clangs and clashes and wakes wild tumult in the soul; sparkling wine that leaves no headache; loving women who tell no lie; men who are friends indeed; a sky of transparent azure like the sky of Africa; a broad moon, silver disked, such as you may see over the Indian Ocean; woods where nightingales sing in a perpetual spring; and fountains by which you may rest and dream that all the world is love. There is, I know, a Corinth to the rich in purse; but really it is not much better than our London, Lady of Fogs, though its Burlington Arcade is reported much finer and more fashionable. There is also a Corinth for the rich in imagination; and this, the City of Splendours, is as fine as the New Jerusalem. Théophile de Viau lived there, and all the reality of the world was like a dream to him.

It was a bad time for all but the men of action and reality. Théophile was born in 1590, when Henry IV. had already struck his first blow for a crown; and he came to Paris in 1610, just before Ravaillac put an end to the greatest reign that France had seen. He came from the sunny South, being born at Clairac, and belonged to gentle blood, his father being an *avocat* at Bordeaux, and his grandfather having been secretary to the Queen of Navarre. His youth was passed in the little village of Broussères Sainte Radegonde, on the river Lot,

amid scenes which he never tired of recalling in after years:

'Yes; I shall see the woodland green
And meadow-islets, set between
The channels, where the cattle lie
Lapped in rich pasture. There shall I
Once more behold my native stream,
And hear its murmuring pebbles fall,
And catch the echoes as a dream,
Which mock the hoarse-voiced boatman's call.

'Once more I feast my eyes upon
The splendour of the nectarine;
Once more I gather one by one
The plums whose purple, mixed with green,
Is fairer than Calista's cheek.
Among the branches while I seek
Their beauty stays my hand, for so
I love to watch their glories glow.

'Once more to roam among the flowers,
Once more amid the hay-cocks deep
To watch at noon the sturdy mowers,
Wearied with labour, lie asleep;
And, for my native land divine
Is rich in vineyards and in wine,
To see the grape-juice all day long
Flow from the wine-press rich and strong.'

He was educated by Scotch scholars, like Montaigne, and tells us how, on leaving school, he fell into debaucheries which nearly ruined him; and how he was only pulled up by the tightness of his purse. This prohibitory tax on vice is undoubtedly a good thing, and we are glad to learn that the same

restraint acted upon his life afterwards, and made him, as he tells us, the virtuous man he became. There is no statement we accept with greater readiness than a man's account of his own virtue, because we are all concerned in believing the world to be virtuous; but there is generally, could we get at it, some less creditable way of explaining awkward matters than a man assigns for himself. The whitest man may be painted black, or at least may turn out a mulatto. This was just what happened to Théophile, who had to spend a great part of his life in washing off the dirt that his enemies threw.

He came up to Paris, like all young fellows with ambition, and began at once to try for patrons and preferment. Court patronage was impossible for a Huguenot and the son of a Huguenot; but he was young; he had friends; he would wait; write verses, and force himself into notice. One of his early associates was Jean François Guez, afterwards better known as Balzac, the writer of letters, then a lad a few years younger than himself. With him Théophile, in 1612, went on a visit to the Netherlands, where they learned the use of snuff and the art of getting drunk by Dutch rule. Then the two friends had a quarrel, never made up, and explained in various ways. Balzac played Théophile a *mauvais tour*. Théophile reminds him in later years of the larceny he committed, and how he became acquainted with the stick of the 'son-in-

law of Monsieur Baudois;' and it is all very mysterious, inexplicable, and of not the least importance. Two lads of seventeen and twenty-two, one a hot-tempered Gascon, quarrel; their lives henceforth lie apart, and there is no reconciliation: that is all. Why they quarrelled, whether it was about the length of a straw, or the excellences of style, or the colour of a ribbon, or a lady's smile, must be left untold. Théophile, for his part, obtained a footing in the household of the Duke of Montmorency, and began by amusing himself with a pretence that, although a follower of the duke, he retained his independence of will, which was all very well so long as he did what was required of him. In the same way any gentleman who, out of mere amiability, complies with his host's invitation to take a turn on the treadmill, may shut his eyes and fancy he is walking gently and easily, of his own accord, up Jacob's ladder.

'Nor let me rear a shameless front, and live
Lapped in the pleasures that your bounties give;
No fawning slave am I, afraid to speak,
No valet base, no secretary meek.
Let others envy those who hold a post,
Which tempts not us who can love freedom most;
But since my slender portion mocks my worth,
And far from rich Peru I had my birth,
So must I fain accept your gentle yoke,
Docile to Fortune's favour or her stroke:
'Tis reason's part these things to soar beyond,
And turn to liberty a fetter's bond;

Thy humble servant let me live resigned,
In act restricted, free at least in mind;
Sure, to no other lord in France could be
Dependent one more mutinous, more free.'

And we may fancy how, after hearing these admirable sentiments, which every patronized bard should know by heart, the good young duke would be kind enough to express his approbation. 'Excellent, Théophile; most neatly turned. Now would you be so good as to hand me my boots?'

What did it matter? Théophile persuaded his Gascon pride of his own perfect independence, and was happy. Those who live in the poets' Corinth are easily cradled by such make-believes and illusions.

The young Duke of Montmorency, who was only twenty when he became the head of the greatest house in France, was a generous patron, a good-natured friend, and an indulgent master. Besides Théophile, he entertained Mairet the dramatist, and half a dozen lesser lights, whose only duties were to make verses for him, to entertain him with talk, and to 'tell him what opinion he should hold on current topics.' Fancy being paid to find opinions for a great man:—like a leader writer to a daily paper with a circulation of one. It was this duke whom Richelieu, in 1632, executed: an act of merciless justice, which more than any other terrified the great lords, and consolidated the royal power. He was the owner of that splendid

park and palace—le Petit Château—of Chantilly, which was to Théophile what Fouquet's Vaux was afterwards to La Fontaine, and Versailles to Racine.

He continued for seven years to enjoy the patronage of the duke while he wrote poetry, epigrams, and letters, raising up, little by little, a crowd of implacable enemies. This it is always easy to do. In the seventeenth century there was a choice of two methods. You might offend a minister, or you might offend the Church. The former was the less certain, because ministers are human, and apt to forgive; the latter, being a corporation, never does forgive. Théophile, of course, chose the more deadly method, and insulted the Church. He was obnoxious to the priests on every ground. Huguenot by birth, he had the right by education and conviction to treat their pretensions with contempt. He was not like some, godless and superstitious in turn; and his friends were like himself, freethinkers and scoffers.

There was Luillier, for instance, the rich *conseiller*, who laughed at morality and religion with a face, as well as a mind, exactly like that of Rabelais, prince of scoffers, who brought up his son, young Chapelle, afterwards Molière's friend, as no Christian ever yet was brought up. There was Jacques Valée, Des Barreaux, Théophile's most intimate friend, whom he called *Vallæus meus*. Why, Des Barreaux was well known to make no secret of his infidelity,

except when he happened to be ill. Did not the Abbé de Bouzez refuse to dispute with him on theology until his next illness? He it was who once, eating an omelette in Lent, surprised by a thunderstorm, conscience-stricken, and recognising the voice of offended Heaven, hastily threw the omelette into the fire, crying, 'Mon Dieu! what a noise over a little piece of fat!' And did not Des Barreaux with others, most likely Théophile among them, go to the restaurant of La Ryer, at St. Cloud, during the Holy Week, eating and drinking the whole week through, calling it their carnival? Then there was Picot, the man who had no qualms of conscience even when he was dying, and actually bribed the curé with a handsome legacy to hold his tongue, and not to torment him with any exhortations. There were the poets of the Malherbe school —Racan, Colomby, Maynard, Porchères, and the rest; not a discoverable ounce of religion among them all, except that Porchères translated Psalms; and it was not yet forgotten how Marot's Psalms had helped in the Reformed cause. And if the opinions of the poets offended the Church, what has the historian to say about their morality? Fortunately, it was at least better than some of their poetry would lead us to expect, and though Théophile's profligacy was alleged as the chief cause of his prosecution, it is pretty clear that this was only a pretext. For in truth, there had been smouldering

in France for a long time a latent fire of infidelity, the first notes of which had been struck rashly by Des Periers and guardedly by Rabelais. The long religious wars ended, people looked round and asked what they were all about. The early religious zeal of the Huguenots had been perverted with political partisanship, and there had been excesses and murders on both sides. To those who had looked for better things, there was nothing but the remembrance of wasted enthusiasm, hopes crushed, lives thrown away; the Catholics had won, but their triumph brought no diminution of dogmatic jealousies. The Huguenots had lost, and only the common sort remained faithful, the leaders, even those of the great houses of Condé, Rochefoucauld, and Coligny, going over to the stronger creed. Of all the noble names on the battle rolls of Jarnac, Coutras, and Ivry, hardly any but the name of Rohan remained. After the desecration of religion by a religious war comes exhaustion of religious enthusiasm; and Théophile, with his facile, sympathetic nature, drifted with the rest into infidelity.

As for literary society, it consisted chiefly of réunions at taverns, as in England. The Hotel de Rambouillet as yet was not in existence; the reign of the *précieuses* had not commenced; Malherbe had his conferences, but only his own disciples attended them; and it was at the *Cormier* and the *Pomme du Pin* that the poets met to drink and

talk. For country excursions there was the famous restaurant kept by Widow Du Ryer, at St. Cloud, which had eighty private rooms for suppers, and pleasure-gardens for ladies; but it was at the Paris taverns that the epigram was born which made a minister wince; it was there that many a poor devil, like Théophile, purchased a life's misery for an hour's applause; it was there that the turbulent crew met which had no respect for Church or priest, and who, relying on the protection of their *seigneurs*, pretended to no reticence, but boldly said and sang whatever came uppermost. And of this crew Théophile became a sort of leader; so that, by degrees, his name was affixed to all that was anonymous, witty, infidel, and loose. Did a collection of evil-hearted verse appear, it was Théophile's; was there an epigram sharper than the rest, Théophile wrote it; old stories, old epigrams were revived, and set down to Théophile; and so far as we can see, Théophile enjoyed and encouraged it all. Notoriety he mistook for glory, and plumed himself on his reputation because men laughed. Whatever it was, this reputation, it steadily grew and increased for seven years, when there came a sharp and sudden check. The tribe of scoffers certainly were not without warnings. Admonition had been conveyed to Théophile that he was to be more circumspect in what he said. One Durand was broken on the wheel for seditious writing; one Sity was strangled

for a similar offence; Lucilio Vanini was burned alive for atheism; the Court complained of the license of the press; the Church complained of its impiety; and no one was surprised to hear that Théophile, the ringleader of the whole unruly tribe, had been peremptorily ordered by the king to leave France, under penalty of strangling, within twenty-four hours. The poet, a good deal surprised by the practical turn things were taking, retired forthwith into the country; first, to the paternal house at Broussères, and then to the Pyrenees, 'among the bears.' After a little the persecution subsided, and he found that he could remain unmolested at Broussères. He persuaded himself that he liked it. 'As for the disgrace, it is nothing but an empty word; they send me away from the Court, where I had no business to be; and if they force me out of France altogether, there is no country in Europe where my name is not known.' He amused himself with travelling about the country with a friend, who nearly got them into a serious scrape by refusing to kneel while the Host was being carried past. The record of part of the journey is preserved in the 'Fragments d'une Histoire Comique,' a narration whose humour has evaporated. On the other hand, it is written in a good sturdy prose, with that melodious ring in it which all poets' prose seems to possess. In the 'Hiſtoire Comique' we get the story of the girl of Agen possessed of a devil. Her

family and the exorcising priests made a handsome living out of the fees paid by the curious to see her in one of her fits. Théophile and his friends exposed the imposture; found that the devil would only talk the three or four Latin words taught by the priest; that it would, and did, swear in good Gascon, and refused to witness any more of the exhibition. Later on this was one of the stories raked up against him, with the usual exaggeration.

Perhaps it was the Agen business and the exploit at Tours which called attention again to the poet, and he was informed that he must leave France. He obeyed, and crossed over to England.

> 'Among the cliffs, along the shore,
> I hear the winds and waters roar;
> A prisoner till the sailors come
> To bear me to my exile home;
> The rocks with white and hoary front,
> Seem groaning 'neath the tempest's brunt,
> Yet manfully lift up their crest;
> And face the storm, and bare their breast,
> Undaunted still and undismayed,
> To meet the lightning's fiery blade.'

He did not like England. The sky was always cloudy; he wanted sunshine, and he thought it a characteristic sign of the low civilization of the common people that they refused to talk anything but English, so that his own voice was of no use at all to him. He made the acquaintance of the Duke of Buckingham, but the king refused to

receive him, whereupon Théophile wrote an epigram, neither better nor worse than most epigrams:

'Si Jacques, le roy du sçavoir,
N'a pas trouvé bon de me voir,
En voicy la cause infaillible:
C'est que ravy de mon escrit
Il creast que j'estois tout esprit,
Et par consequent invisible.'

His banishment ended after two years—one can never be too hard on these erring children of genius—and Théophile, coming back again, immediately showed the worldly wisdom he had learned by attending the conferences of Father Athanase Molé, a Capuchin preacher, remarkable for the number of converts, among those anxious to be converted, that he had made. Like Henry IV., Théophile allowed himself to be convinced, hoping, no doubt, that this step would appease the wrath of his enemies. Partly as a Catholic and partly as a follower of Montmorency, he went on the expedition against the Huguenots in 1621, his brother Paul fighting on the opposite side. Returning to Paris, he published his Treatise on the Immortality of the Soul to show the completeness of his reformation. Unfortunately, being imitated from Plato, of whom the priests knew at least one damning fact, that he was a heathen, the treatise did poor Théophile more harm than good. It is, indeed, a most amazing performance. Fancy Plato intermixed with *galant*; fancy

verses; fancy Socrates making speeches like the following, in prose and verse, mixed up together:

'In order to recollect a thing, one must first have perceived it; when knowledge comes to us in this way, we must acknowledge that it is a reminiscence; if anyone, after having seen or heard anything, remembers not only that, but also some other thing whose source is different, the recollection of the more remote thing must be also called a reminiscence; as, for example, the recollection of a lute and of a man are different things, and when a lover sees a lute on which his mistress has played he remembers her at once.

'Whenas some garden fair I view,
Where rose and lily love to be,
I straight remember Lalage,
Whose cheek is bright with either hue.

'Diana shining in the skies,
For ever young, for ever fair,
And chaste as she is bright and rare,
Brings Lalage before my eyes.

'I see her in the early morn,
Her image floats athwart the sky;
And all day long she greets my eye,
For all around her praise is borne.

'The Graces grouped in marble white,
The sweet boy Love with torch and bow,
All pretty things, above, below,
Remind me of my heart's delight.'

If the doctrine of metempsychosis be true, I firmly believe that Père Garasse, Théophile's bitter enemy, must once have been Socrates and *remembered it*.

This was in 1622. A rascally printer published a volume of loathsome verse, with the name of Théophile outside, and though it was obviously done without his knowledge, though the verses were not his, and though he was in no way responsible for the publication, the clerical party bestirred themselves and got a condemnation of book and author. It was while the king was away from Paris, while the Parliament was prorogued on account of a malignant fever which raged at the time, that Théophile was sentenced to be burned alive. Other poets, supposed to be implicated in the miserable book, were also condemned, among them Berthelot, to be strangled and burned, and Colletet to be banished for nine years. This time it was really serious. Death by burning is to all tastes a disagreeable way of getting out of life, and Théophile did not for his part want to have a choice among any of the avenues which lead to the Unknown. So he ran away, and the sentence was executed in effigy. He began by running to Chantilly, where in temporary security he wrote his 'Maison de Sylvie,' in which he celebrates the life and pleasures of this retreat and the praises of fair Chatellaine, the young duchess. But there was no more peace for him. Foremost among his enemies was one Père Garasse, who wrote a book entirely levelled against Théophile, called the 'Doctrine Curieuse des Beaux Esprits.' It is a curious doctrine indeed that the

Father wished to bring home to our poet; he enumerates the articles of the infidels' creed one by one with that gusto always manifest when good men describe things to be shuddered at. Among them are — that Nature is the only God; that Fate governs everything; that there are neither angels nor devils; that in order to live happily it is necessary to part with every kind of restraint, scruple, and fear. In other words, Garasse marshals the whole secret teaching of French and Italian scholars, and charges all upon the back of Théophile. It is ever the mistake of malicious men to pile their malice too high. Consequently the 'Doctrine Curieuse' would probably have fallen flat, or been forgotten after its little day, but for a reply by Ogier in defence of certain passages in which Balzac was attacked. This provoked another reply; and so the public interest in the unfortunate victim of it all, who lay at Chantilly hoping only that the storm would soon blow over, was maintained. The king, the Court, the Parliament—everybody wished him to escape; and had it not been for his restlessness, the prosecution would probably have dropped. But, like all feather-brained men, he was restless, and began to journey about the country. One day he was followed, quite by chance, by a provost's marshal, who did not know him by sight, but thought it would be as well to see who the stranger might be, and unluckily accused him of being Théophile—

probably the most important sinner on his list. So the capture was effected, and the unlucky poet brought to Paris, where they put him in the Conciergerie and assigned him the dungeon of Ravaillac. The Jesuits had run their prey to earth, and hoped now to reap their unholy reward in seeing him in the flames. They were, however, disappointed. Montmorency interceded with the Procureur-général, Matthieu Molé, and though the prisoner was carefully subjected to the interrogatory drawn up by Molé, and though for six months no alleviation was made in the rigour of his confinement, it seems pretty certain that Molé never intended to do more than satisfy popular clamour and give the culprit a lesson for the future. No one likes being shut up in a dungeon, haunted by murderous memories, fed on prison fare, and reflection in this solitude is apt to be wholesome. No doubt Théophile formed the most sturdy resolutions of amendment should he ever get out of his bondage. Meanwhile, however, he was allowed writing materials, and made a lively use of them, sending to the king an ode which reminds one curiously of Marot's letter to Francis on a precisely similar occasion. He carried on his controversy with Garasse, and he wrote a masterly letter to Balzac; for his old friend had the baseness to attack him when he was in prison and n need of all the support his friends could give him.

History affords many illustrations of the efficacy with which the sight of a stake confirmed the wavering faith of the weaker and brought back to the fold those who were inclined to stray. So have we seen at school, when the hubbub of voices reaches too great a pitch, the master, with a careless air, appease the tumult and drive back all minds to study by simply placing the cane upon the desk. Balzac saw the stake before him, and made haste to express his abhorrence of freethinking, corruption, and license. He writes to the Bishop of Ayre :

'You will find in me at least obedience and docility, and in this age of corruption, when nearly all the wits have revolted from the faith, you have to do with one who desires to believe no more than he has learned from his mother and his nurse. And apart from religion, if I have entertained any private opinions, I give them up with all my heart, in order to reconcile myself with the people, and not to appear the enemy of my country for a single word, or a thing of no importance. Had Théophile followed this maxim he would be living in safety, and not be hunted down *à outrance* like the fiercest of wild beasts ; but he has preferred a tragic end to dying unknown and in a common way. . . . In the time when he contented himself with faults purely human, and when he wrote with hands not yet guilty, I often pointed out to him that his verses were not really good, and that he was wrong in thinking himself a great personage. . . .'

It is the letter of a sneak. A sneak is one who, on the occasion of danger, is careful to save his own

skin in every way possible, at the expense of honour, loyalty, or fidelity. Balzac, who had committed a thousand follies with Théophile, who was once, before he became a prig, of the set, who knows exactly what was the life of the poet, when an opportunity occurs for lending a helpful hand, backs out. 'I am grieved for the unfortunate man,' he says. 'My own knowledge of him was only as a critic, and as such, I told him that his verses were not good'—he was five or six years younger than Théophile—'his life shows the necessity of obedience to the church and docility.' Malherbe, too, wrote about him; for the question was one of a lively interest to every literary man. Great heavens! if they were to take to burning again on the same pretences, think of the scurry and flutter among novelists, poets, and writers of magazine articles! How would editions be suppressed and copies bought up! Picture the churches on the Sunday morning, crowded with authors suddenly remembering their early piety and every man anxious only, like Balzac, to show that he cared for no other religion than that taught him by the fountain of all truth, his nurse.

Malherbe was a wise man. He says that, as for the sins of Théophile, he only believes one; that he has written bad verses; and then he begs Racan to remember that it is best to comply with the ideas of the time; and if his reputation

depends on going to mass once a week, he had better go.

The clamour died away. In 1625, another intercessor appeared—the Duke of Buckingham; and in the autumn of the year the prisoner was released, with solemn injunctions to get away from France at once, on pain of being strangled. He went out of Paris, as the first step, and finding himself once more under the protection of Montmorency, thought no more of the sentence. But his health was broken by his sufferings and anxieties in the prison, perhaps, too, by early excesses; and he died the following year at Chantilly, at the age of thirty-six. An end, too early, of a life which might, had it been prolonged, have proved glorious. The great wealth of promise, like the generous blossoms of spring, was blighted by the winds of dissipation. To Théophile's imagination the flowers of the world possessed hues and perfumes which existed in his own imagination only. Praise was glory; applause was approbation; notoriety was an undying laurel wreath. He lived in the imaginary present and for it; he thought of no consequences; considered no prejudices; never deliberated in any line of action; could understand no reality. We can put together, from detached passages, a character which seems one of great beauty, even if separated from the hard facts which accompany it. Théophile was generous, warm-hearted, impulsive, full

of noble thoughts, and saturated with hatred for bigotry, cant, and sham. But the outer world to him was a pageant, a great drama, which he might contemplate, criticise, and laugh at, but with which he had no personal concern whatever. And when the pageant became a reality, when he was torn from his imaginary city of Corinth, when his enemies trampled him down, he had no strength for resistance, and fairly died.

'He has written bad verses,' says Malherbe. That is quite true. On the other hand, he has written some exceedingly good verses. Scattered here and there among the rhymes which he poured out with a lavish profusion, are single lines, half a dozen lines together, lying like wild strawberries among the rank weeds of the hedge side, sweet, refreshing, and delicious. He has no art; he turns away with petulance from the pedantry and rigour which Malherbe tried to impose upon France; he breaks free with a fling of impatience from all of them, and sings his song his own way. And all in one way. Whatever the *motif* of the verse, whether it be love or lamentation, flattery or complaint, he flies back as soon as he can to the rural scenes of his infancy. 'I have read,' says La Bruyère, 'both Malherbe and Théophile . . . Malherbe, in full and uniform style, shows what there is in nature most noble and most beautiful; he is its painter and historian. Théophile, without choice, without

exactness, with free and unequal pen, sometimes charges himself with description, and grows dull over details, and becomes an anatomist; sometimes he feigns, exaggerates, passes away from the truth, and draws the Romance of Nature.' That is it; he loves nature so much and he understands reality so little, that his very descriptions make for Romance. He is ever thinking of the smiling Garden of France, where the river winds among the meadows, through woods musical with birds, among vineyards and orchards whose purple fruit bears a bloom brighter than a maiden's cheek. He shuts his eyes in the tavern, and then he forgets the drinking song, the tobacco, and the fumes of the wine; in their place, he hears the cattle lowing as they drag the heavy plough; he sees the village blacksmith at his work; he smells the newly-mown hay: he hears the cocks salute the early morn. At Chantilly he is in a different atmosphere, though still in the country. Here are the woods and the gardens, but it is no longer the village life that he describes; there is no smoke curling up among the trees; it is the cultivated solitude of a great man's park, where he can roam and dream; or if he seeks society, upon the stately terraces, among the flower-beds and in the formal walks are the ladies of the Montmorency House. But always the country. Théophile has no drinking songs; there is not much fun in him; the Gascon character is *au fond* serious and sombre;

feather-brained as I have called him, he is melancholy ; life seems, somehow, a disappointment ; and finally, he does not, like the rest of the French, sing the perpetual refrain of the wasting of life :

> ' Tout le plaisir des jours est en leurs matinées ;
> La nuit est déjà proche à qui passe midi.'

There are two great merits in Théophile, vigour and intensity. We may grant all the faults that an ungenerous posterity found out in his verses—he is unequal, he has no power of selection, he is often in bad taste—but these great virtues remain. Read the following, and say if the lines do not ring with genuine passion :

> ' Approche, approche, ma Driade,
> Icy murmureront les eaux ;
> Icy les amoureux oyseaux,
> Chanteront une serenade.
>
> ' Preste moy ton sein pour y boire,
> Des odeurs qui m'embasmeront ;
> Ainsi mes sens se pasmeront,
> Dans les lacs de tes bras d'yvoire.
>
> ' Je baigneray mes mains folastres,
> Dans les ondes de tes cheveux,
> Et ta beauté prendra les vœux,
> De mes œillades idolatres.
>
> ' Ne crains rien, Cupidon nous garde,
> Mon petit ange, es tu pas mien ?
> Ha ! je voy que tu m'aymes bien ;
> Tu rougis quand je te regarde.'

Or this :

'Quand tu me vois baiser tes bras,
Que tu poses nuds sur tes draps,
Bien plus blancs que le linge mesme ;
Quand tu sens ma bruslante main,
Se pourmener dessus ton sein,
Tu sens bien, Cloris, que je t'ayme.'

Or let us take these few stanzas, to show how this maker of 'bad verses' wrote of the country :

'Listen, the birds with warbling faint
Lift morning hymns to yon red rays—
The only God they know—which paint
Fresh glory on their wings and ways.

'The ploughshare plunges down the rows ;
The ploughman in the furrows deep
Strides after, rousing as he goes
His lazy oxen, half asleep.

'Night flies away ; the murmurous day
Wakes all the voices of the light ;
And life and truth, for age and youth,
Drive off the fantasies of night.

'Alidor, deep in happy sleep,
Kisses his Iris in a dream ;
And waking, seeks those burning cheeks,
Which still beside him blushing seem.

'The blacksmith at his anvil stands—
See how the quick fire ruddy shows ;
Beneath the hammer in his hands,
The iron with a white heat glows.

'Yon dying candles feebly burn,
The broad day makes their glimmer low;
The great sun dazzles as we turn,
And catch his rays the casement through.

'Up, Phillis sweet, the morning greet,
And in the dewy garden seek
The flowers spread with white and red,
To match the glory of thy cheek.'

The preceding is one of his most spontaneous as well as his most sustained efforts. The point of excellence, if any, is undoubtedly in originality of treatment. Théophile is nearly the first in France to emancipate himself from conventionality. How hard it has been for art to become true, and how long has been the struggle upwards to something like fidelity! The mediæval poets, with their conventional spring, their sweet season of May, are like the mediæval artists with their conventional human figure. Little by little, as one after another dares to describe, instead of to imitate, we are learning still the true province of poetic art. Let Théophile have the honour, which he clearly merits, of being one of the first to walk alone. May he speak again?

'Each season gifts and treasures yields;
The autumn, fruits and golden fields;
The winter, long and tranquil night
Where men and beasts can take delight.

The spring, her wreaths of newborn flowers,
When dying branches lift their head,
When trees that yesterday seemed dead,
Are bright with April suns and showers.
The summer's rays that too soon come,
Fill out the grape and paint the plum ;
The wealthy earth conceals its store,
Deep down for him who dares explore ;
For us the Indian fields are set
With spices and with perfumes sweet ;
For us with fish the waters teem ;
For us the trout lie in the stream ;
For us the ocean, half in jest,
As coy and wilful as a girl,
Tears from her avaricious breast
Her coral, amber, and her pearl.

* * * *

The Zephyrs yield them to the waves,
The docile waves obey the moon ;
The bee his plundered treasure saves
To give it back in honey soon.

'Fields where no flower may ever live,
Perfume and ivory may give ;
The wildest deserts ever seen
May give a name to king or queen ;
And everywhere the loneliest glade
At least affords a welcome shade.'

'Why then,' he proceeds to say, 'should I not write verses to you?' It reminds one of Shelley's lines:

'See the mountains kiss high heaven,
And the waves clasp one another ;
No sister flower would be forgiven
If it disdained its brother.

And the sunlight clasps the earth,
And the moonbeams kiss the sea;
What are all these kissings worth,
If thou kiss not me?'

Among his sonnets, I find one at least which appears to me worthy of being preserved. It is this:

'Father of all sweet dreams and Lord of rest,
Sleep, whom men fondly liken unto Death,
Whom hast thou wronged, that they, with spite possessed,
So mock thy peace and clear untroubled breath?
Nay, let us sing a grateful hymn, and own
The transports of the spirit lapped in thee;
For thou revivest pleasures past and gone,
And still devisest pleasures yet to be.

'Last night Love came amid the night's eclipse,
And in a happy dream I pressed the lips
Of Elise, lying love-sick in my clasp.
So when I woke life had one memory more;
They knew thee not, O Sleep, who heretofore
Likened thy gentle trance to Death's rude grasp.'

I am not a panegyrist, like Théophile Gautier, of this poet. I confess that his verses only give me pleasure at intervals, and are disfigured by exhibitions of outrageously bad taste. But he is not one of the servile tribe of imitators. Like Regnier, he stands out a clear and well-defined individuality, one of a half dozen, from Marot to Boileau, who

are not mere *umbræ*, not only reflectors of other men's genius; who dare to be independent; who occupy, in different degrees, such a position that no history of French literature would be complete without them; who had, for a time, a following and a school. Poor Théophile, with all the lessons of so many buffetings, shipwrecks, and disasters, might, had he survived the first tumult of his boiling Gascon blood, have learned the rules of taste and the art of compression, and so have become, what he promised to be, the only poet among a troop of versifiers.

[1874.]

ALFRED DE MUSSET

'DURING the wars of the Empire, while their husbands were in Germany, the anxious wives brought into the world a generation ardent, pale, and nervous. . . . From time to time their blood-stained fathers appeared, pressed them to breasts bedizened with gold, then placed them down, and once more mounted their horses. . . .

'After the fall of the Emperor, these men, who had gone through so many battles, embraced their wives, grown thin with anxiety, and spoke of their youthful love. They looked at themselves in the fountains of their native town, and when they saw how old they were, how battered by the wars, they asked for their sons to close their eyes. The boys came back from school, and in their turn asked for their fathers, seeing no sabres, no cuirasses, no infantry, no cavalry. They were told that the war was over, that Cæsar was dead, that in the antechambers of the consulates were hung up the portraits of Wellington and Blucher, with the words, *Salvatoribus mundi!*

'Then, on a world in ruins, sat down a youth full of thought.

'For fifteen years they had dreamed of the Moscow snows and the suns of Egypt. . . . They looked abroad upon the earth—the sky, the streets, the roads—but all was empty, and in the distance sounded only the bells of the parish church.

'On his throne was the King of France, looking here and there to see if a single bee was left in the tapestry: some held out their hats to him and he gave them money; others showed him a crucifix, which he kissed . . .; others pointed to their old mantles, from which the bees were carefully taken out, and he gave them new ones.

'The children looked on all this, thinking always to see the shade of Cæsar disembark at Cannes; but silence continued, and nothing floated in the sky but the paleness of the lilies.

'When the boys spoke of glory, they said: "Make yourselves priests." When they spoke of ambition: "Make yourselves priests." When of hope, of love, of strength, of life: "Make yourselves priests." . . .

'Three elements then divided the life which offered itself to the young: behind them, a past for ever destroyed, still moving on its ruins, with all the fossils of the ages of absolutism; before them, the aurora of an immense horizon, the first bright rays of the future; and between these two . . . some-

thing similar to the ocean which divides the Old Continent from the Young America—a surging sea, full of shipwrecks, traversed from time to time by a distant sail . . . the present age, indeed, which separates the past from the future, which is neither one nor the other, but resembles both, and where one does not know, at each step, whether one is stepping on a seed of the future or a ruin of the past.

* * * * *

'Remained the present, the spirit of the age, and of the twilight which is neither day nor night: they found it seated on a bag of lime full of bones, wrapped in the mantle of selfishness, and shivering with mortal cold.

* * * * *

'This is what the soul said:

'"Alas! religion disappears: the clouds of the sky dissolve in rain: we have no longer any hope in any arm—not even two pieces of black wood for a cross at which to pray. The star of the future is hardly yet rising—it cannot leave the horizon; like the winter sun, its disk appears with a stain of blood, which it has kept since '93. There is no longer any glory; there is no longer any love. Heavy is the darkness on the earth. And before the day dawns, we shall be dead!"

'And then the body spoke:

'"Man is born to make use of his senses: he has certain pieces, more or less, of yellow metal, by means of which he gains more or less respect. To eat, to drink, to sleep, is life. As for the ties which exist between men, friendship consists in lending money—it is rare to have a friend for whom one can go so far; and kinship is useful for inheritance; love is an exercise of the body: the only intellectual enjoyment is vanity!"

* * * * *

'The rich said: "There is nothing real but money; let us enjoy and die!" Those of moderate fortune said: "There is nothing true but forgetfulness, all the rest is a dream. Let us forget and die!" And the poor said: 'There is nothing real but misfortune, all the rest is a dream. Let us blaspheme and die!"

* * * * *

'All the misery of the present century comes from two causes: the people who have passed through '93 and '14, bear two wounds in their hearts. All which was, is no more: all which will be, is not yet!'

Under these influences, detailed, it is true, with a poet's vehemence and exaggeration, grew up Alfred de Musset, the writer of the words above. It is the story of his own youth. There can be no doubt that he presents a faithful picture, though

highly coloured, of the profound impression produced in his generation by the crash of the Empire. After glory had been the dream of France for a quarter of a century, they were taught that it was an unreal and a foolish dream; as they arrived at the age when ambition, love, and honour spur on the soul to noble aims, they found a cold system of repression, with the hated Jesuits barring every avenue. In their homes they learned the story of the Empire; in the papers of the day they saw what France *was*. They fell back, disheartened, upon themselves; infidelity, of the most pronounced type, became the fashion. 'In the Colleges,' says De Musset, 'were heard conversations among the boys which would have startled Voltaire. Nothing sacred was spared, not even the holy Mystery of the Eucharist.' Pleasure became the only good; money to purchase pleasure, the only object. With the Revolution of 1830, however, came a new lease of life and hope, and France, after fifteen years of sullen silence, awoke again.

Alfred de Musset, the son of the well-known writer (Musset Pathay), and the brother of another, Paul de Musset, was born in 1810. He distinguished himself at the Collège de Charlemagne by distancing his competitors; but on leaving the college he found himself irresistibly drawn to literature, to which he gave himself up with an ardour which never left him. Whatever else he was in his life, he was

always an artist. He belonged, at first, to a small set of poets called, blasphemously enough, the *Cénacle* (*Cœnaculum*). Among them he wrote his *Contes d'Espagne et d'Italie*, which were published before he was twenty. No one has ever disputed the poetic merits of this volume; but it contains the gravest faults both of style and morality. Nothing is worthy of respect—nothing of admiration; there are no bounds to passion; no laws of self-restraint; none of religion.

The influence of Byron is very clearly marked in these earlier poems, which have a kind of tumultuous splendour about them; they record stories of man's passion and woman's infidelity; they are written, says Sainte-Beuve, 'with more than man's audacity, and with the effrontery of a page. It is Cherubin at a *bal masqué*, playing at Don Juan.' In point of fact, the experience of the young poet was far below his command of verse; he uses language more than adequate to the deepest and strongest passions of manhood to express the calf-love of a boy. Among the pieces, however, is the quaint ballad to the Moon, which alone was sufficient to attract attention. And when the volume was published, Alfred de Musset could be nothing but a poet. His career was settled. He was one more added to the list of marvellous boys from whom the world expects so much.

There are few incidents in his life, but his

character, and the kind of life he led, may be well made out from his writings. Thus, the *Confession d'un Enfant du Siècle*, from which the first long extract was made, gives us the story of a young man of genius and fortune, of keen and artistic susceptibilities, who, born under the influences we have described, leads at first a life of mere thoughtless pleasures. In his mistress he thinks he possesses an angel. Filled with this belief, he lets the days go by in a kind of Fool's Paradise of delight, which is rudely disturbed by the discovery of her infidelity. His idol shattered, his dream dispelled, there seems at first nothing left to live for, and he sinks into mere despair. From this he is rescued by his friend Desgenais, a cynic of the coldest kind, who lectures him on the folly of looking for any virtue, or any honour, and persuades him to seek forgetfulness in dissipation and debauchery. The death of his father forces him to go into the country. Here he forms the acquaintance of a Madame Brigitte Pierson, living the life of a sister of charity in the village. He becomes intimate with her: he relates all his history, concealing nothing. She, religious as she is, seems to find little to reprehend in his confession, and comforts him with hope. Presently, after a book of the most tender pastoral beauty, filled with the charm which only St. Pierre had ever known before how to pour over his writings —a sort of atmosphere of calm and peace, in which

love, like a flower, easily grows and gradually unfolds its leaves—the expected result arrives, and in the arms of Madame Pierson the *enfant du Siècle* seeks again the jewel he has thrown away—the freshness and sweetness of pure love. With a cynicism which one hardly expects, the writer makes Brigitte a *rosière*—the maiden who has won the rose of virtue. And here the book should, artistically, have ended.

As there can be no doubt that in writing the introduction to this book De Musset attempted to describe the influences of his own childhood, so there can be none that in the scenes of Parisian life so minutely drawn, so true that they must have been copied, not imagined, he described his own life during the first two or three years of his early manhood. In the part that follows—the *liaison* with Madame Pierson—we have an account written from his own point of view — an honourable and chivalrous one—in which he takes to himself all the blame of his celebrated relations with George Sand.

It is impossible to speak of Alfred de Musset without dwelling upon this connection, which would, were it not for its influence not only on his life but on his works, properly belong to the *Chronique Scandaleuse*. It was of short duration, not lasting more than a twelvemonth in all. Their acquaintance began in 1832. In the winter of 1833-34 they went together to Italy; here, after six months of travel, Alfred had a violent attack of

cerebral fever, which nearly lost him his life. His companion nursed him through his illness, and then, immediately after his recovery, they parted, and Alfred came back to France alone. Rumour was of course busy with inventing reasons why they quarrelled, but for a time neither spoke. In the same year, however, there appeared in the *Lettres d'un Voyageur* of George Sand, published in the *Revue des deux Mondes*, a highly-coloured and imaginative portrait, to which we shall presently recur, of the poet. Two years later came out De Musset's *Confession d'un Enfant du Siècle*, which, under feigned names and other situations, gave an account, most generous and even noble, of the wrongs inflicted by the poet himself. Thirteen years later, when he was dead, George Sand published her celebrated romance of *Elle et Lui*, and this was followed, almost immediately, by Paul de Musset's *Lui et Elle*. Never was an amour treated with so much detail, and discussed from so many points of view. The two actors having had their say, a third person gives an account, as he says, from authentic sources, and the result is an insight into the character of both Alfred de Musset and George Sand which is extremely valuable. It is because the portrait of the poet can be drawn from these papers, and because the affair made so profound and lasting an impression on him, that we must notice an episode, in itself, judged from an English

point of view, discreditable, which yet was the only time in his life when the influence of a mind as high as, or even higher than, his own, was brought to bear upon him. In the *Confession*, Brigitte Pierson comes upon the poet's life like a ministering angel. She brings him consolation and hope; she soothes a spirit troubled with turbid memories; she draws out a genius which else might have slumbered; she bears with the poet's wayward fancies; she follows his humours; she endures his petulance; she forgives his faults. Not only this: when she discovers that pity, more than love, is actuating her, she resolves to sacrifice her life to him, and, while she loves another, never to desist from her patient sufferance of all that he makes her endure while life remains. In that part of the work where their early friendship grows, she is the poet's dream of what a woman may be; in the later part, she represents the image left on the poet's heart of what George Sand *was* to him. And, in discussing his own conduct, he spares himself in nothing: he shows how suspicion and jealousy clouded his brain; in the tenderest moments of their love there rises between him and his mistress the spectral remembrance of those love-mockeries of Paris. He hates himself for the past, because it spoils his present; he despises himself for the present, because in his selfish passion he makes its object suffer. Finally, when he resolves to go, when he tears away the chains

that have become part of his own flesh, and sees Brigitte depart with her real love, he thanks God that of three beings who have suffered through his faults only one remains unhappy.

Elle et Lui is written entirely from the woman's point of view. There is none of that chivalrous self-sacrifice which made Alfred take to himself the whole blame: she deliberately makes him the guilty one, the first to break the bonds; he is represented, as doubtless he was, irritable, full of fancies, wayward, capricious; one day he would rage at her like a hurricane, and the next, forgetful of the things he had said, would overwhelm her with caresses. He would stay away for days and nights, and return moody, silent, and peevish; he took umbrage at a word, a gesture, a look; he interpreted everything according to his present mood; he was more changeable than an April day, more unstable than the ocean. Only even while the writer is as it were exculpating herself by pouring reproach on her poor dead lover, we catch glimpses of her own character, which would seem almost to justify the savage attack made upon her by Paul de Musset. She, too, is jealous; she, too, takes umbrage at a look or a gesture; she, as well as her lover, is capricious; she, almost at a word from him, transfers her affections to another; and when she first parts from Alfred, it is to marry her American. The truth appears to be that these two sensitive natures, both seeking what neither

could give—repose for the soul—acted as a constant irritant one upon the other; the few months they spent together was a time of perpetual torment, allayed by an ever renewed hope that some day would dawn the hour of rest and perfect confidence. Two artists, they studied each other, and it irritated both to be made the object of study. George Sand became Brigitte Pierson in her lover's book. He became Laurent de Fauvel in hers. The man's generosity is superior to the woman's. Laurent is a contemptible, melodramatic self-tormentor; he stamps, and raves, and shouts, without any cause at all; while his mistress is intended to be a saint, but is in reality the most odious of creatures. Brigitte Pierson, on the other hand, is a perfectly human, and sometimes lovable creature, and had Alfred met with her, their tour in Italy would certainly have been prolonged.

Paul de Musset's book, *Lui et Elle*, is simply an attack on George Sand. It paints her throughout in colours too strong to be reproduced here. The curious in the matter may read it. Doubtless, many of the incidents are true; but it only proves what might have been gathered from the other two books, that the *ménage* of Mr. and Mrs. Naggleton would be a heaven of peace and comfort compared with that of this ill-assorted pair.

There are points of singular resemblance between the *Confessions* and *Elle et Lui*, which are yet not due

to the resemblance of the story so much as to the similarity of the impression produced by their union on two acutely sensitive minds. We have not space here to pick out these. One only may be mentioned, the curious night scene in the forest. The lovers wander and lose their way, in both books. They resolve to pass the night where they find themselves. But the man, in telling the story, remembers only his mistress's words of consolation and love, and how, with tears, they prayed together at a stone, under the calm light of the stars. 'Dieu merci,' he says, 'depuis cette soirée, nous ne sommes jamais retournés à cette roche, c'est un autel qui est resté pur ; c'est un des seuls spectres de ma vie qui soit encore vêtu de blanc lorsqu'il passe devant mes yeux.' But the inexorable George tells a different story. In her we read how her love left her to wander alone, a prey to evil thoughts : how he was found, almost mad with fear and horror, because he had seen the Spectre of a man bent down with vices, staggering with drunkenness, pass out of the wood and come towards him, and how he looked in his face and saw—himself ; and how the rest of the long night she followed him, with aching limbs, while he rushed from path to path, to escape the memory of what he had seen. Surely the former is the kindlier story, and were the latter true, which one does not believe, it would better have become the writer to hide a thing which she alone knew of. But

Alfred's story *is* the true one: witness his sweet and touching lines, written on revisiting the forest. Could these have been penned had his memory of the night been the ghastly scene depictured by his mistress?

'I thought to suffer, but I hoped to weep,
Daring once more this sacred wood to see:
For here a buried memory lies asleep—
O tomb most dear to me!

* * * *

'Let *him* pour forth regret, and sigh, and tear,
Who kneels and prays beside a dead friend's tomb:
Within this forest all is life; and here
No graveyard flowers bloom.

'Behold through yonder glade the gleaming moon:
Trembles, fair Queen of Night, thy first faint ray:
Yet see, how from the darkness rising soon,
She drives the clouds away.

'And now the earth, still wet with recent rain,
To meet thee forth her freshest perfumes shakes:
So deep within my softened heart again,
Calm—pure—my old love wakes.

'Where are they then—life's sad and troubled dreams?
All that has made me old seems past and o'er,
And, only gazing on this vale, it seems
I am a child once more.

'Oh! Time—oh! lightly flowing years—you bear
Our load of fallen hopes and shattered powers:
Yet moved with touch of pity, still you spare
Our dead and faded flowers.'

Or see what George Sand wrote of him herself, but one year after their separation (*Lettres d'un Voyageur*; *Revue des deux Mondes*, 1834), and compare it with his portrait in *Elle et Lui*. It is written in that vague exaltation of style which is so common with the author :

'The power of your soul was wearisome : your thoughts were too vast : your desires too boundless : your weak shoulders bent under the weight of your genius. You sought in the unsatisfying pleasures of the world forgetfulness of those dreams not to be realized, of which you had glimpses from afar. But when fatigue had crushed the body, the soul awakened again more active, with a thirst more ardent. You left the arms of your mistresses to sigh before the virgins of Raphael.

* * * * *

'In vain you abjured the cult of virtue : you, who would have been the fairest of her young Levites ; who would have ministered at her altars, singing her most holy chants on a golden lyre ; and her white robe of modesty would have clothed your frail body with a sweeter grace than the cap and bells of folly.

* * * * *

'You forgot your own greatness . . . you threw *pêle-mêle* into the abyss all the gems of the crown that God had placed on your brow, the strength, the beauty, the genius, and even the innocence of your age.

* * * * *

'Meanwhile you pursued your own songs, sublime and *bizarre*, now cynical and fiery, like an ode of antiquity, now chaste and sweet, like the prayer of

a child. Lying on roses of the earth, you dreamed of those roses of Eden which never wither, and while breathing the ephemeral perfume of pleasure, you spoke of that eternal incense which the angels offer at the steps of the throne of God. You had breathed it, this incense? You had gathered them, these eternal roses? Had you, then, preserved from the land of the poets vague and delicious memories which prevented you from being satisfied with the vain pleasures of this world?'

* * * * *

The literary life of Alfred de Musset is divided in two by this episode. It severed him from his old style; it gave birth to his new. Risen from those low levels where, as George Sand says, he lay on earthly roses and dreamed of heavenly ones, he abandoned for ever the lurid splendours which had once lit up his poetry and showed the depths of his moral degradation. Two poems, of his earlier style, stand out pre-eminent, not only from the rest of his works, but also from the literature of the day. In sweetness of expression, and in power, *Rolla* and *Namouna*, especially the former, stand unrivalled. *Rolla* is a tale which may be read, but can hardly be told. The hero gives himself three years of life; three years, that is, which his money will last him. At the end of that time he will commit suicide. The last night comes— the last morning. He tells his companion that he has to kill himself—because there is no more money. And then Marie—poor, lost

Marie !—Marie of only fifteen years, who is not guilty because innocence was impossible for her, whom the poet paints in verse as charming as anything in Byron—this rosebud growing on a dunghill —offers—but read the lines themselves:

'Ruiné ? ruiné ? vous n'avez pas de mère ?
Pas d'amis ? de parents ? personne sur la terre ?
Vous voulez vous tuer ? pourquoi vous tuez vous ?
Elle se retourna sur le bord de sa couche.
Jamais son doux regard n'avait été si doux.
Deux ou trois questions flotterènt dans sa bouche :
Mais, n'osant pas les faire, elle s'en vint poser
Sa tête sur la sienne et lui prit un baiser.
Je voudrais pourtant vous à faire une demande,
Murmura-t-elle enfin : "moi, je n'ai pas d'argent.
Et sitôt que j'en ai ma mère me le prend,
Mais j'ai mon collier d'or, veux tu que je le vende ?
Tu prendras ce qu'il vaut, et tu l'iras jouer."
Rolla lui répondit par un léger sourire,
Il prit un flacon noir qu'il vida sans rien dire.
Puis se penchant sur elle, il baisa son collier.
Quand elle souleva sa tête appesantie,
Ce n'était déjà plus qu'un être inanimé.
Dans ce chaste baiser son âmi était partie,
Et pendant un moment, tous deux avaient aimé.'

Love comes in death—but what a love ! And the last thoughts of the ruined libertine are softened by a girl's self-sacrifice.

Alfred de Musset, like his own Don Juan of Namouna, sought at first an ideal love which could not be found. He wandered—

'Asking the forest, ocean, lake, and plain;
The morning breezes always—everywhere—
The mistress of his soul: his hope: his prayer
Taking for bride a dream, unreal and vain,
Searching a human hecatomb to gain
His God, if only he might find it there.'

George Sand taught him what human love might be, if not what it was. The knowledge saddened, but sobered him. Henceforth his verse is grave and subdued, and the early extravagances disappear. George Sand, too, gave him a certain elevation of thought, which was wanting in him at first, and the four pieces entitled *La Nuit de Mai — d'Août — d'Octobre — de Decembre*, show his genius at the highest point it ever reached. They represent his soul at rest; they are sad, but resigned; open, almost as much as Wordsworth, to the influences of Nature, he fills these poems with the air of the season, while he sits in the night and listens to the voice of his Muse.

She reproaches him with his apathy *(La Nuit d'Août)*. Why is her poet silent?

'Ami, de ton oubli nous mourrons toutes deux,
Et son parfum léger, comme l'oiseau qui vole,
Avec mon souvenir s'enfuira dans les cieux.'

To which he makes reply:

'To-night, as through the fields I passed,
I saw a hedge-flower on the way;
A wild briar blossom fading fast,
And soon to fall; beside it lay

A young bud trembling on the bough—
I watched the petals bursting through,
The young flower is the fairer now,
So man is; new, and ever new.'

'Alas!' says his muse; 'always a man: always tears: always struggles. . . . My beloved, thou art no more a poet. Life is wasted in an inconstant dream, and woman's love changes and dissipates into tears the treasures of thy soul.'

Returns the poet:

'Down in the valley as I stood,
I marked how, high above her nest,
A bird was singing, but her brood
Lay dead in an eternal rest.
And yet she sang to greet the morn.
Then weep no more, my muse; for so
God still remains, all else forlorn,
Our God above—our hope below.'

It is next to impossible, without giving the whole poem, to convey any adequate idea either of its thought or of its beauty. There is the double source of inspiration: the poet, on the one hand, saddened with his memories; his muse, on the other, filling him with new impulses, opening his heart to the influences of Nature, and urging him to fresh effort. The contest is between the certain past and the possible future: one half of his soul speaks to the other half: the voice of hope remonstrates with the voice of sorrow: and while we read the lines the air is resonant with the music of his thought.

There is a certain defect in all this retrospective verse, that the effect sometimes produced by it is as of an unreality, a theatrical *pose*. This is, perhaps, partly caused by the foolish illustrations in bad editions, where we always see a youth with clenched fist and hand clasped to his brow, urged on by an excessively plain female in white, who seems to suggest an elopement through the clouds. Such verse as De Musset's should remain entirely in the imagination: every effort — even the best — to personify, to embody a mood of thought, is fatal to the poem; it becomes at once unreal, exaggerated, *banal*.

In the four 'Nights' Alfred de Musset, then only twenty-six, reached his highest point. He was a flower that blossomed early. The poet of youth, his verse has no manhood, and after the production of these pieces he never reached quite the same level. At thirty years of age Heine said of him that he was a young man 'd'un bien beau passé,' a cruel *mot*, which yet was true. He was only thirty when he wrote to a friend:

> 'J'ai perdu ma force et ma vie
> Et mes amis et ma gaieté:
> J'ai perdu jusqu'à la fierté,
> Qui faisait croire à mon génie.'

He did not desire, he said, to live beyond the age of Raphael and Mozart. Death, however, does not always come to those who pray for it. Alfred de

Musset lived till the year 1857, when he died suddenly of heart disease at forty-seven years of age. There is nothing to say about his life but what has been said. He lived: he loved: he wrote: he grew prematurely old: he died. This is his history. He was received into the French Academy in 1852, and he held for many years, interrupted by the Revolution of 1848, the post of librarian to the Minister of the Interior. His portraits show a face of singular beauty: the features cold and clear cut, the forehead high, narrow, and rather receding—the forehead which belongs rather to the imaginative than to the reflective faculty — the forehead of feeling rather than of strength.

His name has been lately a good deal in men's mouths in consequence of the revival of his *Rhin Allemand*. This little piece, of course quite fugitive, written in half an hour, in questionable taste, and as an impromptu answer to Becher's poem, is not to be considered as at all illustrating De Musset's style, which has, at least, nothing of bravado or braggadocio.

But he has other claims upon us. He was not only a poet: he was also a novelist and a dramatic author. His novels, over the most important of which we have already lingered long enough, have obtained some admirers. For our own part, we can only find one, the *Confession d'un Enfant du Siècle*, worthy of special admiration.

The others, which are not without grace, but which appear to us to have been greatly overrated, are chiefly of Parisian life, of grisettes, of young students, of passing *amourettes*, and the like, skimming lightly enough over the surface of things, but all containing passages of that refinement peculiar to French novelists, and especially to De Musset, in which, by a single touch, he seems to convey what would take us a page of explanation and illustration. Is it that the Frenchman trusts more to the intelligence of *his* readers, and that we believe in the stupidity of ours? Very marked, too, in De Musset's heroes is a kind of *selfishness* quite unlike the British type, which comes possibly from his desire, common to all his countrymen, to represent his characters as strong and self-reliant. France, like a woman, loves a strong man. The ideal Frenchman is he who stands in the centre of the universe with folded arms, against whom the tempests beat in vain, but for whom the showers fall and the sun shines. And free from religion as was De Musset, he was yet filled with that simple faith which we, children of Puritans, can hardly understand, that the heart may be at any time cleansed with prayer, and that an act of worship, such as he and his mistress performed at the rock in the forest — spontaneous, simple, tearful —is worth more than many church services.

It is with real relief that we turn to say just two words on his charming plays. These are, indeed,

perfect in their way. Everywhere, except in the theatre, De Musset is theatrical. Everywhere, except on the stage, he poses. Here alone he is simple, unaffected, natural. His stage is the *salon*, and he keeps those grand passions that rend his bosom for his study, as a gentleman should. The *salon* is sacred to society, and De Musset's plays are plays of society. In some of them there is not any plot at all. Thus, in *Il faut qu'une porte soit ouverte ou fermée*, the *dramatis personæ* are two—the Count and the Marquise. There is nothing in the piece, but it is pleasant and amusing. There is hardly a single *point* from beginning to end, but all the talk is good; it is like a pleasant chat of the running call between friends. Here is some of it:

Count. I don't know when I shall cure myself of my awkwardness. I always forget that your day is Tuesday. Every day that I want to see you it seems Tuesday.

Marq. Have you anything to say?

Count. No . . . but if I had it would be no use, for I suppose you will have your usual swarm of callers in a few minutes. . . . I am horribly out of temper to-day. It is so cold. . . . (*A bell rings.*) There is the first caller. I must go. (*Opens the door.*) It is only a little girl—a *blanchisseuse*, I suppose, or something——

Marq. Something, indeed? It is my bonnet that you call *only* something. Well, then, shut the door. There is a horrible draught.

Count. They say that you are thinking of marrying

again . . . and that M. Camus comes here very often——

Marq. Shall I tell you what they say of you? . . . Unfortunately it is too true.

Count. What is it then? You want to frighten me. . . . Explain, madam.

Marq. Not at all—it is your own business.

Count. (*Sitting down again.*) I entreat you, madam. You are the only person in the world whose opinion has any weight with me.

Marq. One of the persons, you mean, I suppose.

Count. No, madam, I said *the* person.

Marq. Ah! *ciel!* You are going to make a phrase.

Count. Not at all—you laugh at everything; but, sincerely, could it be possible that after knowing you for a year, seeing you every day, made as you are, with your *esprit*, your grace, your beauty——

Marq. But you are making a declaration——

Count. If it were a declaration?

Marq. Well, I am going to a ball this evening, where, I dare say, I shall hear more; but my health does not permit me to hear these things twice a day. (*A ring at the door—Count rises.*)

Count. Another ring. I must run away. (*Goes to window.*) No; it is only another little girl. Another bonnet, I suppose.

Marq. Do shut the door. You are freezing me. (*Count sits down again.*)

There is not much in this kind of commonplace, but the piece consists of nothing else. The Count goes on opening the door to go away, and coming back. He renews his declaration; there is a little coquetry; and he gets accepted. Not a

single incident of any kind: no comic business—nothing but a morning call, prolonged by bad weather outside, and a middle-aged gentleman's declaration of love to a widow. It is all as real as one of Mr. Trollope's novels.

De Musset's plays are all good. The *Caprice*—a perfectly delicious little play, with three actors, turning on the faintest cloud of conjugal jealousy, delicate, and perfectly *well-bred*—the *Chandelier*, and *On ne badine pas avec l'Amour* are perhaps the best. The second of these has passages of great power. Falling short of the highest excellence, to which the poor poet could never reach, they are perfect as examples where delicacy of expression and thought are better than strength of situation.

We English read French poetry so little, give so little heed to the intellectual history of our neighbours, that we hardly know of the ambitions and aims of De Musset and his contemporaries. Nor is there room here to talk of them. They were the successors of the great leaders in the Romantic school. Their revolt against the classical canons, headed by Chateaubriand, by Lamartine, by Victor Hugo, was successful, inasmuch as it poured warmth and life into the cold marble image to which the French had transformed their Muse for more than two hundred years; but, like all else in France, except material prosperity, the progress of this literary movement has been stopped of late years. Alfred de Musset

had plenty of imitators, but he has no disciples. He was one of those who would build a house without counting the cost, and he could not carry out his plans when he had laid his foundations. His ideas were greater than his powers: and these were sapped by excesses. Hence an unsatisfied feeling remains after reading him. In youth he is of such magnificent promise; in manhood of such small performance. Rolla, Namouna, Don Paez, form a portico which should have led to a vast and splendid temple; but they stand before a little shrine on which the poet has laid a single, simple offering—the volume of his four 'Night' pieces, and half a dozen others. Let those who read him catch first the charm of the former, and then, remembering what are the key-notes to the history of his life, on which, perhaps, we have dwelt too long, read his novels and his earlier poems. The world, which hoped too much from him, has been disappointed. But there are poems written by him as good as the 'Meditations' of Lamartine, and better perhaps than the best things of Victor Hugo.

[1870.]

LIBRARY OF THE BOMBAY BRANCH OF THE ROYAL ASIATIC SOCIETY

HENRY MURGER

THE Prophet of Bohemia. We sing of the man who first enlightened the world on the lives of those that wait upon hope and struggle in the path of Art against an adverse fortune; who, while he tore down the veil and showed the truth, at the same time raised a cloud of illusion which permits the youthful imagination to hear only the laughter and to ignore the pain. It is only when one becomes older that the suffering shows more clearly than the joy — the days of privation are seen to be more numerous than the days of feasting.

> 'Aimons et chantons encore,
> La jeunesse n'a qu'un temps.'

How glorious—in a perennial round of champagne, flowers, and song; roaming in the wood with Rosette, and filling an empty purse with a poem! Ragged perhaps at times, and a little hungry, but still in what goodly company — with how noble a fellowship! And then the future all before you

—the future of fame and success! Let us see what they are—the imaginary and the real Bohemia.

Alfred de Musset, Alfred de Vigny, and Henry Murger form a sort of literary triad, which may be studied together. Utterly unlike each other, they present occasional points of contrast which are too striking to be overlooked by anyone. They represent the influences of the first third of this century on young men well-born, well-educated, and highly trained. We have to do, so far as the third is concerned, with a mere child of the people, pitchforked into the ranks of literature, but never representing in the smallest degree the voice of the people.

It is not a problem which we have to solve. There is no mystery; only a simple, sad life to tell, mistaken in its aims, bankrupt in its aspirations, ruined by its follies. The miserable necessities of a grinding poverty were its excuse; the impatience which a weak will could not resist, that impatience which longed to enjoy before the period when fortune fixed its time of enjoyment, was the fatal rock on which it split. Alfred de Musset led no happy life, but he pursued at least a high standard of art; Alfred de Vigny was a disappointed man because he rated his own powers too high; poor Murger was wretched because he failed to see that Art must be everything—that genius must love

his mistress all in all, or not at all. He loved other things as well, and so in the lute the rift widened till the music was mute.

Let me first, with permission of the many who know his book so well, recall some of the incidents in the career of that prince of Bohemians, the imaginary Rodolphe. You will see why, as we go on.

The Rodolphe of the 'Scènes de la Vie de Bohême,' when we first meet him, is a young man of two or three and twenty. His face is almost hidden by a profusion of beard, his forehead, by way of compensation, being only relieved from absolute baldness by half a dozen hairs carefully drawn across it in a vain endeavour to personate their departed brethren. He is dressed in a black coat, out at elbows and 'gone' under the arms, in trousers which might be called black, and boots which had never been new, because he always bought them second-hand. We find him in the Café *Momus*, Rue Saint-Germain-l'Auxerrois. We talk literature and art; we drink; we make the acquaintance of three other congenial spirits, Messieurs Colline, Schaunard, and Marcel, and we plunge into Bohemian life. Rodolphe, poet and *littérateur*, is the editor of *The Scarf of Iris*, a journal not entirely unconnected with the millinery and drapery interests, in fact, a journal of fashion. Later

on we find him connected with the *Castor*, an organ of public opinion devoted mainly to advance the great hatting cause. Rodolphe's three friends, one of them an artist, one a musician, one a philosopher, scholar, and private tutor, are, like himself, poor and out at elbows. They are afflicted with a Gargantuan hunger. When funds come in their first thought is food; they go out and eat; they go on eating till there is nothing left in the locker, then they go back to their customary short commons with the resignation of philosophers and the hope of youth. Rodolphe falls in love with Louise. He talks to her in what the author calls the poetry of love. Louise only understands the *patois* of love, so they hardly comprehend one another, and his first flight of the heart is a failure. He is turned out of his lodgings by an impatient proprietor, and lives for a time like the sparrows, *sub Jove*, sleeping in the branches of a tree. Like the sparrows, too, he is always hungry. An uncle, an uncle of romance, a really useful piece of domestic furniture, finds him out at this juncture, and relieves his wants. The uncle, a manufacturer of stoves, has for a long time been meditating a work on chimneys. In his nephew he sees one who can do for him what education and nature have entered into a conspiracy to prevent him from doing himself —write the book. He locates him in a fifth floor; gives him materials, furnishes the list of chapters, provides him with food, and takes away all his

clothes except a Turkish dressing-gown, in order that he may not run away.

The work progresses slowly, far too slowly for the uncle's impatience. In the agonies of composing the chapter on 'Smoky Flues,' Rodolphe discovers from the papers that he has won a prize of three hundred francs (twelve pounds) at a certain Academy of Floral Games. He is rich, he is a capitalist; he tears himself from his drudgery and escapes back to Bohemia and his friends and the editorship of the *Castor*. He lives, as do all his friends, in the cheapest room at the top of the house; he can seldom afford the luxury of fire and not always that of candles, so he goes to bed and stays there. His bed is insufficiently supplied with blankets; so he lies between the mattresses; his expenses from day to day are not, as may be imagined, enormous; and provided only he can weather what he calls the 'Cape of Storms,' that is to say the first or fifteenth of the month, when the bills come in, he is tolerably happy. His time is chiefly spent with his friends at the Café *Momus*, to the grief and indignation of the proprietor, for all the other customers are driven away by the four Bohemians, who drink little and eat nothing. Driven to desperation, the landlord draws out at last a list of his grievances and presents it to them himself. This unique bill of charges sets forth how M. Rodolphe, who always came first, was accustomed

to seize the papers and keep them all day ; how, because M. Rodolphe was editor of the *Castor*, they never ceased bawling for the *Castor*, till that paper was also taken in by the café ; that accomplished, they left off asking for it ; how Rodolphe and Colline were in the habit of keeping the *trictrac* table to themselves from ten in the morning till twelve at night, the other votaries of the game having nothing to do but to gnash their teeth ; how M. Marcel had so far forgotten what was due to a public establishment as to bring his easel there, and make appointments with models of both sexes ; how M. Schaunard was talking of bringing his piano and giving a concert of his own works ; and how he received visits at the café from a young lady named Phémie, who came without a bonnet ; how they actually made their own coffee in the establishment ; and how they, lastly, instigated the waiter to send a love-letter, the composition of which was clearly traceable to the pernicious influence of M. Rodolphe, to the old and faithful wife of the proprietor. The artists compromise matters by conceding the minor points, such as a bonnet to Phémie and drinking the coffee of the establishment, and continue to frequent the Café *Momus*.

Then they all fall in love. Rodolphe's passion for Mimi may be read in the 'Scènes,' chapter fourteen ; nothing can be more faithful, more real, than this sketch of a girl torn from her lover — from his

empty stove and meagre dinners—by the attractions of velvet and silk, plenty to eat and drink, and warmth:

'When the purse is empty—isn't it so, my dear?—
Farewell love, and good-bye 'tween me and thee.
You will leave me lonely, with never an idle tear;
Go, and soon forget me—isn't it so, Mimi?

'Comes to the same, you see; for after all, my dear,
Happy days have dawned and died for me and thee:
Not too many, 'tis true: best things are ever, here,
Shortest and soonest over—isn't it so, Mimi?'

Six years pass: the friendship of the four knows no diminution, their worldly prospects no improvement. Then a change. One of them takes advantage of political disorders, and gets made an ambassador. Sublime impudence of the novelist! Rodolphe and Marcel succeed at last. Then Mimi comes back—poor frail Mimi, a skeleton, pale, worn, emaciated—comes back to seek help and shelter by that Bohemian hearth where her only happy days were spent, with the only man who was ever really kind to her. They pawn their things to keep the life in her. But she dies. Then the band of Bohemians is broken up; they go into society; they take their places in the world; they become respectable, staid, and *successful*. Marcel the painter pronounces the funeral oration over the past. 'We have had,' he said, 'our time of carelessness and youth; it has been a happy time, a time of

romance and thoughtless love; but this prodigality of days, as if we had an eternity to throw away, must have an end; we can no longer live outside the skirts of society; our independence, our liberty, after all, are doubtful advantages. And are they real? Any *crétin*, idiot, illiterate ass, is our master, at the price of lending us a few francs. . . . It is not necessary, in order to be a poet, to wear a summer paletôt in December; we can write poetry just as well in warm rooms and on three meals a day. Poetry does not consist in the disorder of existence, in improvised happy days, in rebelling against prejudices which we can less readily overturn than we can upset a dynasty, and which rule the world. Whatever we say or do, this is certain, that to succeed we must take the beaten path. Here we are, thirty years of age, unknown, isolated, disgusted with ourselves. Up to the present this existence has been imposed upon us; it is no longer necessary; the obstacles are destroyed which prevented our leaving this life. It is finished.'

It seems almost as stupid to give the life of Rodolphe in a brief chapter as it would be to give the life of Martin Chuzzlewit. I do so only because in the book is written the early life of its author, because every character, except perhaps that of Marcel the artist, stands out clear and distinct from the canvas, and is an evident portrait of an

early friend. I do not know the original of Colline, but a Parisian friend writes to me as regards Schaunard the ragged musician. 'There still exists,' he says, 'in the Rue Hautefeuille, close by the École de Médecine, right in the Quartier Latin, an old *brasserie*, black with smoke, fitted up with wooden tables, called the *Brasserie Andler*, after the name of its proprietor, an honest and enormously big Swiss. Thither used to resort about the years 1858-60 the chiefs of the Realistic School, with their apostle Champfleury, and their high priest the painter Courbet. It was something like the Café *Momus*, although not quite so ragged and out-at-elbows. As a student at this period, I used to frequent this café, and made the acquaintance there of the wreck of Henry Murger's old band of friends. The only celebrity remaining there was poor Schaunard, or at least he whom Murger took for his type of a Bohemian musician. His real name was Schaun; he was then about forty years of age, and had an intelligent and open front, regular features, and a moustache *à la mousquetaire*. He had not *fait son chemin*; he was, however, considered *très-fort* in musical composition.'

The name of the real Rodolphe was Henry Murger. He was born in the year 1822, at the foot of Mont Blanc, his father being of very poor and humble station. When he was still an infant he was brought to Paris, where his father got a place

as *concierge* or porter. His boyhood was passed in the streets and in the court of the hotel. Education he had little or none: only the simplest rudiments of learning, such as a poor man could afford to give his son: no Latin, no Greek, none of that education, most useful of any, which boys at a great school communicate to each other. When he was thirteen or fourteen years old he got noticed by M. Étienne de Jouy, who lived in the hotel. It does not appear clearly how far De Jouy, then a very old man, interested himself in the boy. But he took some care of him, it is clear, because he obtained for him his first situation. Intercourse with this old adventurer could not fail of being singularly useful to a lad of genius and imperfect education. Old De Jouy was a man whose history ought to be written. He knew Voltaire by heart when he was a child; he had a commission and lost a finger fighting the Moorish pirates at thirteen; fought the English under Tippoo Sahib at twenty; rescued a Hindoo girl from suttee, nearly getting killed in the process; got put into prison for trying to snatch a Cingalese girl from a convent; escaped in an open boat and was picked up at sea; came back to help tear down the Bastille; fought in the revolutionary army; prison again as *suspect*; married an English girl; prison again for that; turned royalist; and took to writing, getting another dose of prison from his own friends in 1819. One may fancy the old man

pouring his pernicious Voltairean doctrines into the ears of the bright-eyed boy who sat listening to the revelations of new worlds.

When he was sixteen, De Jouy placed him in the household of Count Tolstöi, one of the great Russian House of Ostermann Tolstöi, as private secretary. One of Murger's biographers has discovered that the cook of the Count had four times as large a salary as the private secretary, and has a bitter fit of sneering thereat. It seems to me a very simple thing. A cook is a most important functionary. He exercises exceedingly delicate duties, and he must be a man of the greatest skill and experience, while young Murger had nothing to do but to read and copy. Surely this kind of sneer is very absurd. And it is always happening. Whenever the life of a man of genius is written, somebody discovers that when he was sixteen, and had five shillings a week, the footman had ten; and then we lift up our hands in pity and disgust. The secretaryship did the boy a great deal of good. Count Tolstöi made him read all the best French writers—those of the nineteenth century only—so that Murger remained to his last day as ignorant of the writers before Chateaubriand as he was of Chinese. His three years of this work made him a writer as well as a reader, and when he left the Count at the age of nineteen or twenty he obtained at once a post on 'Correspondence de Journaux de

Départements.' To be sure it was not a great thing—fifty francs a month, eight hours a day, twopence an hour—but it was a beginning; it launched him into the sea of literature, and placed him among the struggling mob of young writers, painters, dramatists, poets, and novelists which formed his land of Bohemia. 'It was a bad generation,' says Pelloquet, 'one which was old before its time; one without enthusiasm yet without experience; one overflowing with vanity yet without self-respect; which opposed its petty irony to every kind of enthusiasm: which allowed the magnificent heritage of 1830 to perish in its hands.'

In other words, the lofty enthusiasm of the Romantic school was dying out, and as yet nothing had arisen to take its place. We need not, however, look for high aims and devotion to art in Henry Murger and his school.

Murger tells us something of his own struggles in a letter:

'Possessing some tincture of orthography we worked at our sheet, where our prose was occasionally paid for at the rate of eight francs an acre—something like the price of English pears. The founder of our journal, in which prudence compelled us to refrain from putting "The conclusion tomorrow," disappeared one day. He owed us for many an acre of copy. We began by tearing our hair, a distraction which nature no longer permits

me; then we agreed to pass the bankruptcy over to the account of profit and loss.

'Nevertheless, three months afterwards—it was a Saturday and the last day of Carnival—while we were regretting the impossibility of keeping the feast, comes an official letter, in which we were invited, as creditors of the journal, to receive twenty-five per cent. of our claims. Think of it! Never were poor recipients more happy.'

He got literary promotion and was put on the staff of the *Corsaire*, edited the *Moniteur de la Mode*, just as Rodolphe edited the *Echarpe d'Iris*; contributed verses in the style of Alfred de Musset to the *Artiste*, and wrote novelettes and sketches, among others the famous 'Scènes de la Vie de Bohême.' And at last people discovered that there was a man among them who had opened a new vein; and success, of its kind, came to him.

He is spoken of by those who knew him in his younger days as a singularly modest and unassuming man, prematurely bald, with great sweetness of expression; always good-natured in his conversation, quick of temper but easily appeased, and entirely without malice. He used to make his appearance in the office of the *Corsaire* bathed with perspiration, as if he had been running through the streets, and sit down to write a chapter of his 'Scènes,' for which he was paid at the rate of a louis a chapter—not much more than a penny a line. Not that he was

a rapid writer; on the contrary, he would spend days and weeks over a single chapter, touching and retouching, but his ideas flowed freely. He was always in somewhat delicate health, the effect of many dissipations, which he condemned, but had nôt the courage to resist.

Among his friends were Fanchéry, poor Gérard de Nerval, Champfleury, Nadar, Beaudelaire, Pelloquet, and others who have since made some kind of mark in literature, small though it be with certain of them. Some of them used to assemble either in that Café *Momus*, where Rodolphe first met his friends, or in that other *brasserie* in the Quartier Latin of which we have spoken. On the site where once stood the Café *Momus* is now a confectioner's shop, so that the Bohemians of the present day, however anxious to keep up old associations, must go elsewhere to hold their *réunions*.

In one of these early years, his friend Pelloquet tells how he went to pay him a visit. He found him ill in bed, alone. The room almost bare of furniture; the bed without curtains or hangings, ill furnished with covering. As he lay there, this poor young Bohemian, his visitor remarked that his eyes constantly turned with longing to a certain shelf, where reposed a black velvet domino and a pair of soiled kid gloves. Soiled kid gloves and a velvet domino. They ought to have been carved upon his tombstone, for they give a sort of key-note to his life. In sick-

ness and in health, in poverty or in funds, he was always looking at the velvet domino and the soiled kid gloves. To the young man, entirely ignorant of society, never having penetrated into the circles of social order and domestic happiness, the *bal de l'opéra* probably appeared to be the highest attainable form of human enjoyment. Music was there, at any rate, with warmth, lightness, and society; with bright eyes, and with forgetfulness of the 'acres of copy' which had to be written before his rent was paid. When the last illusions of youth were gone there remained the habit. Henry Murger's ideas of 'pleasure' probably never altogether changed.

It is noteworthy that the 'Scènes' were written at the early age of six-and-twenty. In it he touched the highest point of his genius. He never got any further. Later on, when he wrote the 'Dernier Rendezvous,' his style is deepened, his fire fiercer, but he never wrote anything so good, so faithful, and so complete. It is as real as Defoe, and ten times more *spirituel*. A vein of youthful gaiety runs through it from beginning to end; not the gaiety of careless acquiescence, but of hope. The ragged artists only regard their life as *en parenthèse*. Better days are coming. Marcel shows at last how the life of Bohemia is only an episode in the career of a man possessed of genius but destitute of friends. This point has been entirely overlooked by his critics. They seize on the scenes in the book, and neglect

its obvious moral. Yet in Marcel's words the moral lies clear and distinct. But the stern moralist is quick to seize an opportunity; so he points the finger of scorn at the young fellows; shows how they are at their wits' end for the next day's dinner; how they practise all kinds of expedients; declaims at their grovelling and material life; at their gigantic feasting when money comes in, at their want of prudence and foresight. Very well, they do eat and drink enormously when they can; they do lack foresight; their life is shabby, poor, and mean. Very true indeed. But suppose our moralist, who is generally fat and well-liking, with a balance to his credit, were condemned to a few years of privation; what if he were so far reduced as to be sometimes actually hungry? Is it not reasonable that a young fellow of five-and-twenty, with a really obtrusive twist, and with barely enough to eat, should look upon abundance as a thing specially desirable and altogether lovely? Nobody finds fault with Homer when he describes the great banquets, dwelling with delight on the meat upon the spit, the long tables, and the zealous attendants. The poet is probably one of those who had but a nodding acquaintance with roasted mutton and broiled venison; but he had recollections, and he rolled them over and under his tongue. So with poor Murger. Starving men dream of banquets; thirsty men of fountains; your hungry genius of Belshazzar's feast.

Moreover, if an unexpected windfall put him in possession of funds, he does not waste his wealth in paying debts, but calls his friends together and gives them a lordly dinner. Who will care for saving a few paltry francs out of this miserable present, when he looks forward to a great and solid future? Not for these things do we blame Murger's artists.

Rodolphe and Marcel went back to society; Murger stayed in Bohemia. He never had the courage to give up his old habits, perhaps, because he was always in money difficulties, he never had the means; so he was always on the outskirts of the world, always looking for better things, singing gaily:

'Just as a gipsy wanderer
Roams at his own sweet will
So I on the highway of Art
Am aimlessly wandering still.

'Just as a gipsy wanderer,
Nothing but hope at his back;
Penniless else is my pocket,
Nothing but hope in my pack.'

Yet he made his name; was put on the *Revue des deux Mondes*; wrote more novels and sketches, all exactly alike; brought out two or three plays, but failed of making a real dramatic success.

As the years go on and he passes to the thirties, he ceases to sing of youth, and betakes him to regretting the past:

'Hast thou forgot, Louise, Louise,
That night in the garden gray,
When, like the blossoms on the trees,
Your hands in my hands lay?
Our parted lips refused a word;
Our knees all trembling met;
The willows o'er us hardly stirred;
Say thou rememberest yet.

'Canst thou forget, Marie, Marie,
The day we changed our rings?
The golden sun lies on the lea;
The lark above us sings.
The brooklet prattles down the glade
Beside us as we lie;
Marie! though springs and roses fade,
Let not this memory die.

'Canst thou forget, Christine, Christine,
The room with roses gay,
So near the sky, so small, so mean,
Our April and our May?
And when, one night, the moonbeams bright
Fell on thy cheek and breast,
"Unveil," they cried, "thy beauty's pride:"—
Canst thou forget the rest?

'Ill ending hath my poor Marie;
And fond Louise is dead;
Christine, the fragile, on the sea
To sunnier skies is fled.
Alas! Louise, Marie, Christine,
Down with the years are borne;
The past a ruin that hath been;
I left sometimes to mourn.'

The old loves are gone and can return nō more. Or they come back and find the heart dead and cold, the flame extinct :

'I saw a swallow yestere'en,
The bird that brings the flowers ;
I thought of one who loved me when
She had her idle hours.
Pensive I gaze on this old sheet
Time-worn, dusty, wan ;
The calendar of that brief year,
When first our love began,

'No, no ! my youth cannot be dead,
For I remember yet ;
And if outside your footsteps strayed,
My heart would bound, Musette—
Musette, the faithless ! why, again,
It leaps up still, in truth.
Come back and share once more my fare—
Bread, with the mirth of youth.

'Why, see ; the very chairs, the same
That loved your face so fair,
Only at mention of your name,
Put on a brighter air.
Come back, my sweet old friends to greet,
In mourning for you still :
The old arm-chair, the great glass where
Your lips have drunk their fill.

'The white dress that became you so,
Put on, my eyes to please ;
On Sundays, as we used to do,
We'll wander 'neath the trees.

And in the arbour, as of yore,
We'll drink the white wine clear,
To bathe thy wing ere yet it spring
In full song to the air.

* * * *

'Well; she remembered; yestermorn,
When carnival was done,
To her old nest the bird was borne;
Musette has come and gone.
My arms flew wide, but yet I sighed;
My heart was so estranged.'
It was Musette; 'twas I; but yet—
We both were, somehow, changed.'

Like most men brought up in the midst of great cities, Murger was passionately fond of the country. A few years before his death he found a little thatched cottage at Marlotte, that village in the Forest of Fontainebleau where the artists love to find subjects for their easels. Thither he went at the first breath of spring, trying to revive his youth among those quaint interminable alleys, all alike save for the play of the cross-lights. Among those he used to wander, thinking, we may suppose, of his faded illusions, of the better fortunes of that imaginary Rodolphe, his own *umbra*. Perhaps in those latter days the black domino and soiled kid gloves were forgotten, put into a pocket. But at all times they represented that sort of gaiety which he could describe and *convey*, though he never seems to have felt it. For he was never a light-hearted man,

never of bright and happy disposition: latterly, irritable, perhaps from the contrast between his conception of life and his execution; morose and sensitive to the highest degree. Something always jarred; he was never in tune with nature.

The great charge always thrown in his teeth is that he failed in his promise. This seems to me a short-sighted and imperfect way of putting it. He was a man who had the rare faculty of accurately describing. He told what he knew, not adding to the details of reality, but setting them off with the bright and happy touches of genius. He knew, unfortunately, only one kind of life. He described this perfectly, inimitably. As he knew nothing else, he went on describing it. But when he attempted to go beyond what he knew, as in 'Madame Olympe,' or the 'Victime de bonheur,' he appears to me to be vague, commonplace, and insipid. On the other hand, no one can read the stories of Francine, Hélène, Marianne, so full of sympathy and sorrow, without feeling that they are real stories, only put into shape by the artist. Because they are true, they are lifelike.

I cannot persuade myself that he has done much harm. None but a very youthful mind could be attracted by the life which he describes. His scenes are so full of misery and poverty; we see present always before us the yearning eyes with which the

poor artists gaze upon the world of respectability and plenty. Their *amourettes* are so sad and so full of bitter results ; their surroundings are all so mean and sordid. No one can be hurt by the story of Rodolphe. At the same time his books are absolutely, totally, incredibly devoid of moral sense or religious principle. I believe that Murger never had either. Perhaps his father, the *concierge*, was too busy looking after the lodgers to inculcate morals or religion. Perhaps the Voltairean De Jouy had been too busy repeating the works of his master, which Murger still had by heart. His obvious fault, that on which everybody fixes, is, of course, his inability to see anything in life but youth. Youth means joy, health, love ; if money goes with it, it means flowers, expeditions to Ville d'Avray and Asnières, with champagne. When youth goes there is nothing left. One might as well die at once as grow old. Life only has twenty years in it—between eighteen and thirty-eight. So, getting close to that turning point when, with men of his 'persuasion,' the years bring nothing but dust and ashes, he wrote those melancholy verses of his, of which the reader may take the following as a translation, for want of a better :

'"Whose steps are those ? who comes so late ?"
"Let me come in ; the door unlock."
"'Tis midnight now ; my lonely gate
I open to no stranger's knock.

"'Who art thou? Speak!' "Men call me Fame;
To immortality I lead;"
"Pass, idle phantom of a name."
"Listen again and now take heed:

'"'Twas false. My names are Love and Youth!
Why, God himself is young and true."
"Pass by; the girl I thought all truth
Has long since laughed her last adieu."

'"Stay, stay; my names are Song and Art.
My poet, now unbar the door."
"Love's dead. Song cannot touch my heart,
My girl pet's name I know no more."

'"Open then now; for see, I stand,
Riches my name—with gold—with gold—
Gold and your girl in either hand."
"Too late; the past you still withhold."

'"Then, if it must be, since the door
Stands shut till first my name you know,
Men call me DEATH. Delay no more;
I bring the cure of every woe."

'"'Tis DEATH? Ah! guest so pale and wan,
Forgive the poor place where I dwell;
An ice-cold hearth, a broken man,
Stand here a welcome thee to tell.

'"Welcome at last; take me away;
Whither thou goest let me go;
Only permit my dog to stay,
That e'en for me some tears may flow."'

Lines very sickly and morbid, are they not? But at the same time, in one so *real* as Murger was, they no doubt expressed a mood which more than

once clouded his brain. To show that he was not always moaning over himself and his ruined aspirations, take the following, which I have rendered as faithfully as is in my power :

'It was Saturday saying to Sunday,
"The village is still and asleep ;
By the clock it is twelve, and for one day
Rouse up, your own watches to keep.
I am tired of my trouble and labour,
I must rest for a week from my care ;
Your hour is striking, my neighbour."
Quoth Sunday, "My friend, I am here."

'He awoke, and the night lay behind him,
The night in its royal array :
The spangles of stars seemed to blind him ;
He rubbed his dull eyes as he lay.
He yawned as he dressed, like a mortal,
And then, when his toilette was done,
He knocked at the dark Eastern portal,
To wake up his comrade, the Sun.

'He climbed to the top of the mountain,
He gazed on the village beneath ;
No sound but the drip of the fountain,
"'Tis as still," murmured Sunday, "as death."
He crept down the hillside, and going
Pit-a-pat, to the village he came ;
To the cock whispered, "Friend, by your crowing,
Don't tell the good people my name."

'But 'tis Sunday ; 'tis Sunday ; behold him,
With the spring, with the sweet month of May ;
The almond as if to enfold him,
Hangs out a white robe on each spray.

Every flower its eyelid uncloses ;
In the garden an Eden is born ;
The violets sing to the roses ;
The proud oak unbends to the thorn.

'On the edge of his nest just awaking,
The thrush gives a welcome of song
To the swallows their homeward way taking
From the south, where they've lingered so long.
In his plumage of spring, flying proudly,
The goldfinch gleams bright in the trees,
So glad that he cannot too loudly
Fling song after song to the breeze.

'He has come, he has come, and gift-laden ;
His hands full of treasures for all ;
And a ribbon is here for the maiden,
And here, for her sister, a doll.
There is nothing but singing and laughter ;
Uncorking of bottles and flasks ;
And see, there is more yet ; for after
There follow the music and masks.

'Oh ! rest for the peasants, and ease ;
They may ask of each other, and tell—
"Thy father is better, Therese ?"
"And the little one, Robin, is well ?"—
"Fine weather for vines and for dressing"—
"The fairest of seasons and best."
And to all Sunday comes with his blessing—
Save only the piper—of rest.'

The end to a life of many privations, much dissipation, and much disappointment, came very early. He had his ten years of a very fair success, and lived so much out of the world, that he hardly

knew he was successful; he was *décoré* in 1860—a doubtful honour for one like him. He died in 1861, before completing his thirty-ninth year. It was perhaps time, because youth was gone for him, and wealth had not come. His heart must have sunk when he reflected on the men who had succeeded and himself who had failed—on the sermon which he put into Marcel's mouth fourteen years before.

He had complained of languor and faintness for some time. The winter killed him. He died in a hospital after a fortnight's illness, his last moments of work being spent in revising his poems; Mimi the faithful, for Rodolphe had his Mimi who loved him, attended on him to the last. After passing all his life as a Voltairean and an infidel, he died *en bon chrétien*, with a priest at his bedside. All literary Paris attended his funeral, whither also, out of respect for their *sacer vates*, came the whole of the Pays Latin. The day was foggy and cloudy—a fitting time for the funeral of one whose life had been a long succession of rainy days. And then the critics wrote tearful notices of him—those bright and sympathetic notices which they do so well in France. If he had been an Englishman they would have had his life all written out ready for use, to be pulled down and printed, dry and hard, on the day after his death. His life, with all its embarrassments, disappointments, and miseries, may be taken

as a bitter contrast to Marcel's sermon, which he wrote at six-and-twenty. Who would desire such a life? Is it not better to be 'respectable,' when respectability means comfort, ease, dignity, and a decent income?

He died, and we pity him. Why? Is it not because he lets us see his heart? He was a sympathetic man; so, because he can feel the struggles of others, we too feel for him. And then one fancies that the hand of fate was upon him. In his early lack of education, his isolation from the real world, his entranced absorption in the present, his exaggerated idea of the world of pleasure, we see so many snares and pitfalls, into all of which he tumbles and falls by turns. He should have been taken into that quiet domestic life in which poor France, so much decried in these evil days, is so rich. There he would have found peace and a wider world. But his guardian angel was asleep when he wanted help; so he blundered, naturally enough. What are they about—these guardian angels—that they let things turn out so badly?

[1873.]

FROISSART'S LOVE STORY

COME with me to a certain quiet corner that I know in a great library; a corner where we shall find no one, except a few specialists, who will glare at us. It is the pretty way of specialists to glare upon intruders. One of these is proving to his own satisfaction that there never were any Courts of Love at all, which is as much as to prove that there never were any Olympian games at all. Another, a German this, is collecting Old French ballads, which he will publish with *variorum* readings like a Greek chorus. Then he will go about declaring with pride that the Germans alone understand early French literature, just as the Germans alone understand Shakespeare. A third, a sprightly young Frenchman, is collecting anecdotes, which he will make into a volume, and call it a 'Research.' Let us sit down among them, quietly, without disturbing anyone, and read the story of Froissart's single love passage, told by himself, in the poetry of which he was so proud.

I admit that Froissart is better known as a

chronicler, but some deference should surely be paid to a man's own opinions, especially about himself. And on the occasions when Froissart had to be entered in account-books as a recipient of princely gifts, he called himself a poet—*dittor*. As for the right to the title, in the first place anyone may call himself a poet; and in the second, Froissart wrote an enormous quantity of verse, just as good as that of any rival *dittor*. It is not his fault, nor was it his expectation, that the world should refuse to read him any more. Some day, the world may even find itself too busy to read the 'Ring and the Book.'

Froissart, in his own estimation, then, was, before all, a great poet, who sometimes wrote chronicles. His verses mostly remain in manuscript. From the selection which has been published in Buchon's edition, I have gathered the history which follows.

I have always thought that the singers who piped during this period of poetic decadence have been harshly treated. Critics display an acerbity towards them which seems to betray temper. Yet these gentle poets are an unoffending folk; they do not pretend. They are content to follow in the old grooves, and to sing, to the old tunes, songs which are as like unto each other as the individual members in a flock of Chinamen.

Great poetry, indeed, can only be expected in times of great strife, peril, and upheaval, as in the

sixteenth and seventeenth and end of the eighteenth centuries. It does not always come even then. But in the fourteenth century, though things mediæval were passing swiftly to universal change, every institution seemed fixed and unalterable as the courses of the planets. As was the daily life, so was the song. Listen: you hear the sweet and simple tune, and you are presently tired of it. Listen a little longer: you become accustomed to the monotony, and you find yourself, like your ancestors, expecting the same tune, and anxious only to find out what variation, if any, will be put in words and thoughts.

And there is another thing; it is pleasant to discover in these old poets the same canons of honour, truth, and loyalty, which are the code of the modern gentleman. These *trouvères*, knights or clerks, have nothing at all to learn from us. They show themselves, in their rippling and monotonous verse, as jealous for what we call in our priggish modern cant the 'Higher Culture,' as any writer or preacher or poet among ourselves. There is nowhere a more perfect gentleman, as disclosed in his own unaffected verse, than Charles of Orleans, or Eustache Deschamps, or Froissart himself.

They are trying to revive once more the old forms of verse. The ballad, the triolet, the virelay, the rondeau, and the rest have appeared again. Just now, though already there are signs that the first

freshness of surprise is gone, the movement possesses the charm of novelty. The revival is quaint; in the hands of Swinburne, and of Mr. John Payne, the translator of Villon, the old-fashioned rhymes become delightful; in all other hands, so far as I have seen, they are laboured, self-conscious, and constrained. It can hardly be expected that they will take a permanent place among the naturalized forms of English verse. Even when Swinburne uses them, it is the dexterity of the poet which pleases us, not the beauty of the verse. The paucity of our rhymes and our own rules of rhyme render it very unlikely that the ballad or the villanelle will ever become more than a plaything, or a vehicle for *vers de société*. One can hardly understand Shelley pouring out his thoughts in rondeaux, or Wordsworth preferring a ballad to a sonnet.

Froissart tells the story of his love in the 'Trettie de l'Espinette Amoureuse,' a composition of some four thousand lines, interspersed with ballads, virelays, and rondeaux. The tale is told after the manner of the time, with prolix preambles, reflections, introductions, and digressions: we must not, however, interrupt the narrator, and if we only give him full scope, we shall presently reap our reward in finding what manner of youth was Froissart in the days when he had as yet no thought of going a-chronicling.

He begins with a few reflections on love. Young men, he says, earnestly yearn for the time to arrive

when they too shall be able to pay their tribute to Love, although they know nothing of the troubles and perils which surround the Court of that sovereign. 'Such was I when I was young. At twelve years of age my chief pleasure was in seeing dances and carols, in listening to minstrels and the words which bring delight. At school I followed the little maidens about, just to give them an apple, or a pear, or a ring; great prowess it seemed to win their favour. And I said to myself that when the time should come for me to love, like all the rest, *par amours*, no one ought to blame me. For, indeed, in many places it is written that with love and arms come all joy and all honour.

'And know, that never did I lean
To loves disgraceful, base, and mean;
But ever strove to render well
All service due to damoiselle:
And other guerdon hoped for none,
Than favour sought and favour won.
Still doth the recollection raise
The wearied soul from earthly ways;
Still, like a painting richly dight,
That memory lingers in my sight,
Still feeds the heart and keeps alive
The thoughts in which true pleasures thrive.'

He goes on to explain that a man, considering how short a space he has to live, should employ his time in the most profitable manner possible, viz., the cultivation of love. Then he begins with the

beginning, and describes his education, his childhood, and the games he played.

I wish he had been as explicit in the description of his school-life as he is in that of his games. Here, indeed, he is almost as detailed as Rabelais himself, who gives a list of two hundred. Froissart's list contains about sixty.

'Ah! happy time,' he cries, when—

> 'Whether to speak or hold my peace
> Alike was joy without surcease;
> When on a simple posy neat,
> Fit offering for a damsel sweet,
> More store I placed than at this day
> I set by tale or virelay
> Worth twenty marks of silver white:
> So full my heart was of delight.'

Amid these simple joys he grew up, went to school and was flogged, fought other boys, and went home with his clothes torn, for which he was *mis à raison*—but this was labour lost, 'because I never did it the less for that'—conceived a great fondness for reading romances and treatises of love; and began to try his hand at writing verses.

One regrets that he was not impelled to set down more details of this time, and to give the world a picture of that mediæval bourgeois life at Valenciennes to which he belonged by birth. But that was not in the way of a courtly plot. Writers of *fabliaux*, it is true, might condescend to such details.

Arrived at adolescence—in another poem we have the further particulars of his passage from school to the profession of poet—he has a vision. The season, according to fourteenth-century requirements, was May; the time, early morning; the place, a garden. The birds were singing as if in emulation, 'Never before saw I so fair a morn.' The firmament was yet glittering with stars, though Lucifer was already driving them away. All this is quite in accordance with polite usage; what follows, although not absolutely new, is yet unexpected. The youth sitting under a flowering thorn looked up into a sky clearer and more pure than silver or azure. He was seized with a rapture of spirit, and while he gazed there came floating before his astonished eyes three fair women and a youth.

> 'A youth is he of ancient fame:
> To men, Dan Mercury his name;
> Great is his wit and great his skill,
> He teaches children, at his will,
> Each art and several mystery,
> And speech of craft and subtlety.'

Mercury introduces himself in a neat, off-hand manner, quite in keeping with his character as god of the light-handed gentry, and then proceeds to inform the poet that he sees before him no other than Juno, Pallas, and Venus. At present, he explains with a charming frankness, as if the goddesses were not within hearing, their relations with each

other are by no means cordial, on account of the recent judgment of Paris; the two disappointed ladies agreeing in one point, that the decision was entirely due to the shepherd's pitiable ignorance and rusticity. He then goes on to point out all the miseries which followed this important verdict. All this time, while Mercury is volubly explaining the situation, the three goddesses make no remark of any kind either to each other or to Mercury. The reader has to imagine them standing in cold and unapproachable majesty, two of them with clouded brows, deigning to take no notice whatever of the young clerk before them.

Then Mercury asks for Froissart's own opinion. What opinion could be expected of such a youth?

> '"I think that Paris, when his voice
> Named Lady Venus for his choice,
> Bearing to fate and fortune's meed
> And future loss no reck or heed,
> But placed the apple in her hand,
> Rightly the case did understand.
> Because that Helen fair thereby
> Became his queen and mistress high;
> So that my judgment steadfast lies:
> For Helen's sake he gave the prize.
> This was fit guerdon for all pain,
> So will I everywhere maintain."
> Quoth Mercury, "I knew it well;
> This is the tale all lovers tell."'

This said, Juno and Pallas retired as they came, silent and scornful. Did the poet, one asks, really

mean to convey, by this silence, the impression of divine grandeur? They are introduced in a single line: we feel their presence: we can mark the anger burning in the cheek of the Ox-eyed, and firing the cold eye of Pallas; they stand looking afar off; they vanish, as they came, with Mercury.

'Et à ce qu'il s'evanui,
Juno sa mère le sievi,
Et Pallas: je ne les vis plus.'

That is, however, a modern way of looking at it. May it not be that Froissart desired to represent nothing more than a condition of grumpiness, for which I believe there was no adequate word in his tongue? Venus remained behind, Venus gracious, grateful, generous, and she stayed to promise him a reward. What could she give—what had Venus to give—but beauty? He shall love and reverence a lady, fair, young, and gentle. From Valenciennes to Constantinople no king or emperor but would hold himself well paid by such a gift.

'Then I who was surprised but yet rejoiced of heart, with simplicity and great doubtfulness cast down my eyes upon the ground. Young as I was I had not yet learned to hear things of such great price, or to receive such payments.'

The promise of Venus was soon fulfilled. Very shortly afterwards he finds a young lady whom he knows by name, at least, reading in the garden. He

advances timidly and addresses her *doucement*, 'Fair lady and sweet, what is the name of your romance?'

She replied, 'It is called Cleomades; well and amorously is it written. You shall hear it, and then you will tell me how it pleases you.'

This proposal pleased him very much. But he thought little of the romance, so much occupied was he with the reader. 'Then I gazed upon her sweet face, her fresh colour and her hazel eyes—better could not be wished—her long hair fairer than flax, and hands so beautiful that the daintiest lady in the land would have been contented with less.'

She began to read a piece which made her laugh. 'Now I cannot tell you how sweet was the movement of her lips when she laughed, not too long, but softly and gently, as the most nobly born and the most well-bred lady in the world.'

Then she asked him to read in his turn. He read two or three pages. 'Then we left off reading and began talking, simple sort of talk, such as young folks delight in.'

When it was time to go away *la belle* invited him, *moult amoureusement*, that is, with the courtesy and kindness which befit ladies worthy of love from lord or poet, to come again. 'Hé mi! what joy those words gave me!'

He did not fail to accept this gracious invitation. She asked him to lend her another romance. He had at home the 'Bailli d'Amour,' which he promised

to send her, and then, craftily taking advantage of this opportunity, he wrote a ballad and put it in the volume. The ballad is a complaint of love to 'la belle que tant prison.' Great was his disappointment when the romance was returned and with it the verses. The lady had not accepted his offering. Had she read it? He thinks not. We, on the other hand, may be allowed to believe that she did. Surely feminine curiosity would have impelled her to open the paper, at least, and when it was once open the next step was short indeed.

After this rebuff he entered upon a short course of severe but extremely enjoyable martyrdom, being as happy as Don Quixote when, for love of Dulcinea, he banged his head against the rocks and cut capers in his shirt. Happiness returned when, on his offering a rose to his mistress, she accepted it. Joy, sorrow, and love must all alike be expressed in verse, and so he went back to the garden, where, under the very rose-bush from which he had plucked the happy rose, he composed the following virelay:

'The heart which still in mirthful guise
Receives whate'er the years bestow
Of wealth and pleasance or fair show,
I ween is in its season wise:
This will I hold where'er I go.

'In this estate of love, so sweet,
Many there are in dule and moan
(As those devoured by fever heat),
And know not wherefore they must groan.

Yet still the heart, full conscious, tries
The secret way of health to show,
Ah me ! if only I could know,
Where hope to seek with anxious eyes,
Blythe would I sing farewell to woe.
The heart, etc.

'I think, more pleasant and more sweet
Than my dear lady is there none ;
My soul lies captive at her feet,
And yet the lover's tears flow on.
For when from dreams of night I rise,
And think I dare not tell her so,
Or that my lady doth not know ;
Or that she scorns these plaints and sighs,
'Tis bootless thus to sing, I trow ;
The heart which still in mirthful guise
Receives whate'er the years bestow
Of wealth and pleasance or fair show
I ween is in its season wise :
This will I hold where'er I go.'

The virelay finished, the lover had to live upon hope until he met the lady again in a company of five or six, when 'in solace and high revel' they sat and ate ripe fruit. He did not dare to speak what was in his mind, but spent the time in remonstrating with himself, like lazy Lawrence inviting lazy Lawrence to get up. 'Come,' he says, 'if you dare not tell her what is in your heart, what can I think of your wisdom? Living like this is not life at all,' and so on. Quite uselessly, however.

Another time they met at a dance, and Froissart stood up to dance with her. 'Hé mi ! com lors

estoie liés—how joyful, how happy I was!' So much was he encouraged, that when they sat down, the dance finished, he informed *la belle* that his joy was wholly due to her grace and beauty, and that if they were alone he would tell her more. 'Would you?' she replied coldly. 'Now, is there any sense in your loving me? Let us dance again.'

Any sense? There was, truly, a throwing of wet blankets. From one point of view there was no sense at all. The lady was of gentle birth. The young clerk was not only a bourgeois, but also in the lesser orders of the Church. Perhaps she was not yet old enough to understand the charm of love in dumb-show and make-believe, which had no end in view but the gratification of a poet's fancy and the following of an allegorical fashion. She had yet to learn—in the sequel it will appear as if she never did learn—all that can be got from that sacred and chivalrous devotion which Froissart was ready to offer her.

Time went on, but it brought little comfort to the hapless swain. Sometimes he saw his mistress, and observed, with gnashing of teeth, that she was just as gracious to others as to himself. Now it chanced that there was a lady at Valenciennes known to Froissart, who was greatly in the confidence of *la belle*. To her the young clerk repaired, and with honeyed words and offers of service persuaded her to hear his tale and to stand his friend.

The lady, who had been already for a whole year, we are told, experienced in the proper methods of love, advised him to go away and write a ballad, which she undertook to place, as if it was the work of someone else, in his mistress's hands. 'When she speaks of it, I will let her know the author of the lines, and that you wrote them all for love of her.' This was a very pretty, if not quite original, plot. The young poet went away and wrote the verses. Here they are:

'Lady of worth and beauty fair,
In whom dwell all sweet gifts of grace,
My heart, my love, my thought, my care,
Are slaves before thy gentle face;
Therefore, O lady of laud and praise,
I pray for guerdon great to me,
The gift of kindly thought from thee.

'From day to day I make no prayer,
At night no other hope finds place,
But evermore and everywhere
To serve thee in thy works and ways;
And though I plead in lowly case,
Yet dare I ask, Oh! grant to me,
The gift of kindly thought from thee.

'By words, by songs, by works, by prayer,
A lover's faith and truth you trace,
Go ask and search out everywhere,
All that I say, my deeds, my ways.
Should these unworthy seem, and base,
Forgive me, nor withhold from me,
The gift of kindly thought from thee.'

Mark," however, the sequel. When these insidious lines were craftily given, according to the plot, to the lady for whom they were intended, an unforeseen accident occurred. She *knew the handwriting* and laughed, saying mysteriously 'Ça!' What comfort is to be got out of a colourless interjection? It may mean anything; presumably 'ça' meant some sort of discouragement. To be sure, she added presently the words, 'What he asks is no small thing'; yet there is not much in the way of hope to be gathered from this sentence. It must be owned that the young lady appears throughout singularly cold as regards her proposed suitor. This lack of encouragement reminds us that we are in a period of decadence, when the pretty make-believes of the olden time are fast losing, if they have not already lost, their significance and their influence. Had it been a great lady, such as Queen Philippa or Yolande of Bar, the poet might have had a better chance. To this little country *damoiselle* courtly fashions and chivalrous customs would probably have small attractions. So Froissart went melancholy again and smiled sadly in pleasing anticipation of dying for love and of a broken heart, 'just,' he says, 'like Leander, who died for love of Hero, daughter of Jupiter, or Achilles, who died for Polixena, or the gentle youth Actæon.' Think of representing poor Actæon's hapless end as due to love. But Lemprière had not yet been born.

This uncertainty turned into despair when he heard that they were preparing for the young lady's marriage. As nothing more is said about that event, it is presumed that it either never came off, or else that it proved to make no difference in the course of Froissart's courtly love. An opportune illness which occurred at this time, doubtless due to the absence of drains in Valenciennes, was naturally ascribed to love-despair, and at its commencement he prepared for death with a ballad, the refrain of which was:

> 'Je finirai ensi que fist Tristans,
> Car je morrai pour amer par amors.'

It seems part of the general unreality of the story that he inserts here a long 'Complaint' in a thousand lines, which we are to suppose was written during the fever. Of course it is unreal, because it is conventional. But about the illness there need be no doubt: that fever may be considered a historical fact. As it happened opportunely, it became a convenient peg and a favourable occasion for the assertion of despair.

After worrying through his fever and his 'Complaint,' and getting well of both, he found himself constrained, by want of money, to leave his native town. He had long enough dawdled about the lesser courts, getting a ballad 'placed' here and a rondel introduced there; it was now necessary that

he should seek his fortune. The main chance prevailed over love; he sailed for England comforted by the possession of a mirror which his mistress had used for three whole years. The confidante stole it for him. He met with a most favourable reception at the English Court, and it is pleasant to read the gratitude with which he speaks of it.

'None came to this country who was not made welcome, for it is a land of great delight, and the people of it were so well-disposed that they desire ever to be in joy. At the time when I was among them, the country pleased me greatly, because with great lords, with ladies and *damoiselles*, I very willingly amused myself. Yet know, that I never cease to think of my lady.'

And then there was the mirror. He laid the mirror every night beneath his pillow in order to dream of his mistress. And once he had a vision.

He dreamed that he was in a chamber hung with tapestry. In the chamber was the mirror. And as he gazed into it according to his wont suddenly the face of his lady—no other—appeared. In her hand she held a comb, and with it she was parting her fair long tresses. 'Mightily astonished was I, but yet I could not have wished to be in any other place.' Then she spoke to him, or seemed to speak, from the mirror, 'Where art thou, fond heart and sweet? Forgive me that I think of thee.' Forgive, indeed! He turned to utter his forgiveness, con-

vinced that she was looking over his shoulder into the glass; but there was no one. Then he went back to his mirror, when he saw her again. Once more, bewildered and frightened, he searched the chamber and the stairs which led to it, but could find no trace of his mistress. Then he remembered the story of 'Papirus and Ydorée,' which he narrates in full, 'just as Ovid tells it.' I do not, myself, remember that legend in Ovid. It is a magical experience of the same kind.

He returns to his mirror, and his lady's face is still visible. And then, to his infinite joy, *la belle* speaks to him again, or rather sings to him, *in verses of his own composing*, 'La Confort de la Dame.' The comfort, it must be owned, was administered in a large and liberal spirit; for it takes nine pages, or about three hundred and fifty lines. But what are a few hundred lines, more or less, to a fourteenth-century poet?

Her voice is silent, her face vanishes from the mirror, and the dreaming man awakes, whispering to himself, 'Here be marvels and phantoms,' a remark fully justified by the circumstances of the case. The natural consequence of such a dream was that he began to pine for the sight of his mistress in the flesh, and that he wrote a love-sick virelay which he gave to Queen Philippa. 'She read aright that my heart was drawn elsewhere, and after a little examination easily ascertained that I was in love.

Then said she, "You shall go, so may you have before long good news of your lady. Therefore I give you leave from this day, only I will and require that you return to me again." Then I, kneeling, replied, "Madame, wherever I may be your commandments shall be obeyed."'

Laden with gifts he returned to his own country, 'en bon estat et en bon point.' The first thing he did was to seek out the confidante, to tell her the surprising vision of the mirror, and to give her the virelay which he had written on the occasion. He heard that his name had been mentioned by the lady on more than one occasion, and was thankful, as all true lovers should be, for small mercies.

He did not see her for twenty days after his return: then he heard that she was to be present at a great dance, to which Froissart was not invited. Nevertheless, he went to the hotel in the evening, and, standing without, for he was afraid of entering without an invitation, he peered through a 'pertuis,' an opening of some kind—one trusts it was not the keyhole—and so saw his lady dancing.

When he actually did meet her it was by accident at the house of the confidante, who, like all kind ladies when they are taken into the secret, was good enough to introduce the subject, saying, 'Parfoi, you are both of a size: you would make a sweet pair. God grant that love may join you.' But the poet was shy, and in spite of the expostulations of

his heart—'You see her before you and have not the courage to avow your sentiments!'—could not speak. The *damoiselle* it was who broke the awkward silence by asking him, *moult doucement*, how he had fared on his travels. 'Madame,' he replied, 'for you have I had many a thought.' 'For me? Truly! how came that?' 'From this, lady; so much I love you that there is no hour of the evening or morning when I do not think of you continually; but I am not bold enough to tell you, dear lady, by what art or in what manner I first experienced the beginning of this passion.' The lady looked at him and laughed a little; then she turned to the friend and remarked that the young man was none the worse for the journey that he had made—a safe thing to say. In fact, it seems as if *la belle*, not at all in love with her admirer, was yet anxious not to appear unkind, nor, on the other hand, to commit herself. Unfortunately, Froissart tells us nothing about her, of what family she was, whether or no she was beset with lovers who could give her more than the poetic passion of the penniless young clerk.

There followed another period of melancholy and hope deferred, alternating with times of refreshment, during which the lover had many interviews with his mistress, always in company with the faithful confidante, in a room beautifully furnished with carpets, cushions, and pillows, whither he used to bring flowers and strew them over the floor. Here

he would sit and tell the two girls of the great joy which their society afforded him, at which they would laugh, not displeased. It was a delightful season, but it was interrupted by a great and irremediable sorrow. The confidante fell ill and died, and they lost their friend and their favourite place of meeting.

But another opportunity occurred. They met in a garden, where, among the flowers, he spoke again. The lady gathered five violets and gave him three, a favour from which he augured the best. Then they sat beneath the shade of a nut-tree, side by side, his heart a-flame, and yet not daring to tell the grief and martyrdom which he was enduring. Two little girls were with them in the garden ; they ran about and gathered gilly-flowers, which they threw into the laps of the lovers, and while the lady collected them into posies, the lover sang a ballad. After this he begged for a little comfort, which the lady half promised.

The garden became the scene of many such interviews, in which they talked all sorts of things full of joy, such as of dogs, birds, meadows, leaves, flowers, and amourettes. Then they had a sort of picnic. It was a beautiful morning in spring ; Froissart found out beforehand where the *damoiselle* was going, and who would accompany her ; he got up early and, provided with pasties, hams, wine, and venison, repaired to the spot, chose a place beneath

a flowering thorn, and spread a breakfast to delight his sovereign queen. She was so greatly pleased with this act of devotion, that she consented to let him call himself her servant.

'Lady,' he prayed, 'in the name of love, alleviate these heavy pains, and accept me as your servant, sworn to do your hest.'

'Would you like it,' she replied, 'to be so?'

'Yes.'

'Then I should like it, too.'

Could gracious lady more sweetly accept a lover's devotion?

The happiness unalloyed which followed lasted but a very little while. In the place lived one Malebouche—Evil Mouth—he lives everywhere. This maligner and envious person, observing what a good time the young poet was having, set himself to defame and speak ill of him. He succeeded so far that the lady's friends remonstrated with her, and she begged her lover to desist from seeing her till the storm, whatever it was, should blow over.

He obeyed. Such obedience, however hard, was a part of his devotion. He not only abstained from seeking her out, but if he passed her hotel he drew his bonnet over his eyes so as to avoid seeing her. He obeyed the very spirit of this injunction; he obeyed with ostentatious zeal: he made a fuss with his obedience. But one evening he yielded to temptation and disobeyed.

It was in the twilight; he had been lurking about outside the house, when he saw the lady as she stood in the doorway, and presently walked down the street to where he stood.

'Come here to me, sweet friend,' he whispered as she passed.

To his astonishment, she replied in angry tones, 'There is no sweet friend for you here.' Then she went on her way, while he remained, amazed and disconcerted, in his hiding-place. But she turned back and came towards him. Was she going to relent, then? Oh! heavy change! It was not to relent at all, it was to seize him by the hair, to tear out a handful, and to leave him in consternation and despair. Here was a melancholy end to so poetical a wooing. After all his sufferings, after his piles of ballads, this was all he got—dismissal, not with a gentle sigh and regretful farewell, not even with a box on the ears, but with rude and discourteous tearing out of air by handfuls. And no record, anywhere, in romances or in Ovid, of lover so dismissed. No comfort from poetical parallel.

He went home, this unfortunate lover, and sought consolation in the manner customary among poets —a ballad.

This is the end of his amourette, innocent enough in its progress and melancholy in its ending. Yet what has he to say that is not in praise of love?

'Never could I in verse recite
What grievous pains, yet great delight,
Befell me in the cause of love:
Yet still I hold and still approve
That, but for love, of little worth
Would any man be on this earth;
Love is to youth advancement high,
Commencement fit of chivalry;
From love youth learns wise rules and ways,
And how to serve and how to praise,
And into virtues turns his faults:
And so I hold 'gainst all assaults,
That thus, in love's obedience blessed,
Should be commenced high honour's quest.

'And for you, O my sovereign lady, for whose sake I have endured so many pains . . . my heart still glows with the ardent spark of love, which will not leave me. . . . Never have I loved any other, nor shall love, whatever may befall. There is no hour in which I do not remember you. You were the first, and you shall be the last.'

Not one word of reproach. Loyal to the end.

This story, extracted from its setting of allegory, reflections, and digressions, shows us Froissart as he was in his early years, long before he used to jog along the bridle-path beside a knight fresh from the wars, asking questions and getting information. He was young, ardent, full of hope, open to the gracious influence of sweetness, spring, and love. He had read the romances of the *trouvères*, and he believed in them. He, too, would live the life they inculcated, the noblest, he thought, the highest and

purest life attainable by man. To enter upon that life there was wanting one thing—love. Needs must that he find a mistress. His cleverness, his courtly manner, his skill and mastery in words, raised him above his social rank and placed him as a fit companion to ladies and noble *damoiselles*. To one of these he dares to lift his eyes—not with an earthly passion, but in that spirit of chivalrous love which he has learned from his romances; what *le petit* Jehan de Saintré was to his lady in the early days of that amour; what Thibault of Champagne was to the stately Blanche; what Petrarch was to Laura, or Guillaume de Machault to Agnes—that would he become, if it might be so, to his *dame souverraine*. To gladden heart and eyes by the contemplation of loveliness, to enrich the soul by meditation on the graces and virtues which dwell, or should dwell, in so fair a mansion, to cultivate the thoughts which make a man worthy of sweet lady's love—these things seemed to the simple young poet the most precious duties, inasmuch as they bring the most precious rewards, of life. They were, he had learned from his reading, an education for the young, a continual festival for the old. Not in vain, not for nothing, does ingenuous youth tremble beneath the eyes of maidenhood. They are, or should be, to him an admonition and an exhortation. They preach a sermon which only the gentle heart can hear and understand. The eyes of *damoiselle* spoke

to the *trouvère* of enjoyments which the common herd can never dream of, so that even now there are but few to comprehend how loyal suit and service could be rewarded and satisfied by gracious words and kindly thoughts. Froissart's love was, indeed, cruelly broken off and cut short in its very beginning; but that of others, more fortunate, continued unbroken and undiminished till death. The story of Thibault and Blanche is a model of what such love may be, that of Petit Jehan de Saintré shows how such love may fall off and degenerate, by the unworthiness of one, into contempt and hatred.

It is, of course, acted allegory. By such love, in those days, lords and poets taught themselves and their children that noble knights and gentle *damoiselles* could elevate themselves. Such love required simple faith in honour and virtue, and simple shame that before the sacred shrine of love anything should be brought but strong purpose and pure heart. What a foolish old story! What sentimental unreality!

It was to the majority of mankind unreal and foolish even while the poets sang it and the knights practised it. Side by side with the *trouvères* were the *conteurs* and the poets of the *fabliaux*, who pointed the finger of mockery at things which the others held sacred; tore down the decent veil from what should be hidden; laughed at all for the frailties of some; derided and scorned the poet's *eidolon*

of perfect womanhood. This is what always happens. Comes Setebos and troubles everything. In all ages, then as now, the young man sees two paths open before him. One of these, in the time of Froissart, led upwards with toil and peril over rocks and among brambles, but the light of loyal love and gracious favour guided the traveller; the other began with a gentle decline, down which the young man could run, dancing with the *garces*, singing with the *jongleurs*, and drinking with his fellows. Clouds hung over the end of that path, and where it terminated—but here accounts differ.

An old, old fable indeed, that man and woman should live for each other, believe in each other, and by such belief elevate each other. It strikes in this age of doubt on unheeding ears. Perfect manhood! perfect womanhood! Dreams and drivel! Let us close the book. No doubt, outside the library, we shall find a purer and a higher worship.

[1879.]

THE STORY OF A FAIR CIRCASSIAN

ONE day, somewhere in the year 1698, the French ambassador to the Porte, a certain M. de Ferriol, was paying a visit of curiosity to the slave market of Constantinople. Among the 'lots' put up for public auction he found one consisting of a bevy of young children, girls, who had been brought away prisoners, the only survivors of the sack of a town in Circassia. They were all huddled together round one of their number, a child of three or four years, whom they kept in their midst, as one to whom a certain respect was due. This one, the prettiest and most winning of all, was, as the slave-merchant pretended, the daughter of a Circassian prince, while the rest were the children of his subjects, prince and subjects having all been massacred and done away with. The Count de Ferriol, moved perhaps partly by the beauty of the child and partly by the story of her nobility, bought her for the sum of fifteen hundred francs, which does not seem an extravagant sum for a Circassian princess, and sent her to his house. Her name was,

as he was told, Aïssé, which was perhaps his Gallican way of pronouncing Haidée, or perhaps a corruption of Ayesha. Being careful, like most men of his time who had no religion whatever, to observe religious usance, he had her promptly baptized. But though she received the name of Charlotte at the font, she never went by any other than that of Aïssé to the day of her death.

The Count de Ferriol, soldier, diplomatist, and libertine, was a fair specimen of the men of his time. He had already spent fifty, or perhaps sixty, years in intriguing and fighting, wherever fighting and intrigue were possible, and in pleasure-seeking in the intervals. He appears to have been, like most of his contemporary French noblemen, destitute enough of religion and morality, but bound by that code of honour which has done such good service in the absence of the former; proud, too, brave, and ostentatious. He went back to France in 1699, taking with him his little slave, and after leaving her in charge of his brother's wife, he returned to Constantinople for the uninterrupted enjoyment of ten more years *à la Turque*—a mode of life he found remarkably conformable to his views and manner of thinking.

Little Aïssé stayed behind to be educated, her guardian, or master, being apparently resolved to spare no trouble or expense about her. She found two other children in the house about her own age, the sons of Madame de Ferriol, afterwards the

Counts Pont de Veyle and D'Argental. With these as brothers, she passed her childhood, receiving from Madame de Ferriol, a weak, bad woman, as much kindness as it was probably in her nature to give, and from her two pseudo-brothers a real and brotherly affection which never failed her. To the pretty little Circassian, indeed, everybody was disposed to be kind and affectionate. The romance which attached to her history was alone sufficient to make her an object of general interest; added to which she grew up wonderfully beautiful, clever, and graceful. The ambassador, during her childhood, remaining in Constantinople, Paris began to busy itself about the future destination of the girl, and to wonder what the Count de Ferriol intended to do with her. A certain letter of his, which is still extant, the only one of all that he wrote to his ward, leaves no doubt at all as to what he intended to make of her; but as the Parisians had not the opportunity of reading the letter, the question to them doubtless formed a curious subject for speculation.

The letter itself shows us a mind struggling between the dignity of age and the selfishness of an unworthy passion. The piety by which he reconciles the two is especially worthy of remark:

'When,' he says, 'I rescued you from the hands of the infidels, and bought you, my intention was not to prepare vexation and unhappiness for myself, but rather I intended to profit by the decision of destiny

on the lot of man, and to dispose of you according to my own pleasure, to make you, that is, either my daughter or my mistress. The same destiny wills that you should be both, for I find myself unable to separate love from friendship, and the desires of a lover from the tenderness of a father. Conform yourself, therefore, quietly to your lot, and do not attempt to separate what it has pleased Heaven to unite.'

—a letter hardly calculated to inspire feelings of delight in the breast of the young girl, but, at any rate, clear and unmistakable. Poor Aïssé must have looked forward with anything but pleasure to the prospect that awaited her. Had she, then, received the best education possible—had she lived as a sister to the two boys of Madame de Ferriol, a daughter of the house, the pet and darling of the brothers, only to become the mistress of a worn-out and depraved old debauchee?

Heaven, however, which, according to her guardian, had designed their union, by the same way of reckoning, caused their separation; for M. de Ferriol was afflicted by two or three attacks which brought on the temporary loss of reason—a fact which we learn from a letter of his complaining of the treatment to which he had been subjected—and was recalled in 1712. Broken down in health and dreading, no doubt, a return of these attacks, he seems to have made no attempt to remove Aïssé from Madame de Ferriol's house, and she continued there until, in 1720, the old man's health became permanently ruined and he took to his bed. Then

Aïssé went to nurse him, and stayed with him until he died, full of years and with very little honour.

Perhaps the gratitude of the girl was able to touch the heart of the old sinner with some compunction for his evil intentions: at least it had power enough to make him leave her by will an income of four thousand livres, equivalent to about four hundred pounds sterling at the present value of money, besides a *billet de banque* for a considerable sum. Madame de Ferriol made strong objections to the magnitude of the bequest, and hinted spitefully at undue means having been used to extort the sum; so that Aïssé, stung by her reproaches, threw the *billet* into the fire, and Madame de Ferriol quietly pocketed the whole sum, and gave her no thanks.

By this time, however (1722), Aïssé was no longer in her *première jeunesse*, being at least twenty-eight years of age. She had been in society, the best in Paris, for ten years, and was one of the acknowledged beauties of the time. Everybody knew the fair Circassian. Epigrams were made upon her, of which one, good enough in its way, remains, the author confounding Circassia with Greece:

'Aïssé de la Grèce épuisa la beauté;
Elle a de la France emprunté
Les charmes de l'esprit, et l'air et le langage.
Pour le cœur, je n'y comprends rien:
Dans quel lieu s'est elle adressée?
Il n'en est plus comme le sien
Depuis l'âge d'or ou l'Astrée.'

It is difficult in these few pages to convey any adequate idea of the society in which she found herself. Perhaps a few words about the people among whom she was thrown will show as well as any formal description the standard of manners and morals of the Regency, at which bad time she had the ill fortune to make her début.

Foremost among them stands, of course, Madame de Ferriol herself, the ambassador's sister-in-law. Eldest of three sisters (*nèes* Guerin de Tencin), she married early in life M. de Ferriol, President of the Parliament of Metz, by whom she had two sons. Entertaining for her husband that amount of respect and consideration usual among fashionable ladies of her time, she transferred her affections to the Marquis d'Uxelles (Du Blé), Marshal of France, and Governor-General of Alsace, who had the honour of being the leader of her train of lovers, without prejudice, of course, to the warmth of affection with which she was regarded by the others. But for him she seems really to have cared. Of her husband one hears few particulars worth recording. Probably he accepted the inevitable, and went his own way. There was, therefore, little domestic virtue to be learned of the woman in whose household little Aïssé was brought up; nor, indeed, was there much to be learned at other houses where she was likely to go. Certainly not at that of Madame de Tencin, the younger sister of Madame de Ferriol.

She was emphatically a woman of the Regency, bad, heartless, ambitious, and clever. Owing to the *res angusta domi*, she was originally placed in a convent, where she led a sufficiently free and unfettered life for five years, until she got thoroughly weary of it and protested, getting the support of a more than friendly abbé, against the vows. Being partially absolved from these, she became canoness at Neuville, near Lyons; and being relieved again from even the light restraints of this office, she went to Paris and associated herself with her brother, the Archbishop of Embrun, an ambitious and intriguing priest. For him alone she seems to have had a real and sincere affection. To advance his interests nothing was too hard for her to attempt: no obstacle of honour or of self-respect too difficult to be surmounted; and for him, so long as she lived, she schemed, intrigued, lied, and sinned. She had the good or bad fortune to attract the notice of the Regent, whose mistress for a very brief space she became. His list was so long that the distinction was not a very great one: only Madame de Tencin had the ability to retain his friendship long after she had lost his affections. Fontenelle, D'Argenson, Bolingbroke, and Destouches, appear in the list of her lovers. Voltaire, when a young man, still called Arouet, was admitted to her *salon*. She was the mother of D'Alembert, the celebrated mathematician and philosopher, whom she sent to be

exposed immediately after his birth on the steps of the church of St. Jean le Rond. Here, however, the child was quickly picked up, and his father, Destouches, recognised and adopted him. The last of her lovers was La Fresnáye, who killed himself, as she asserted, at her feet with a pistol; but he left a paper behind stating that Madame de Tencin had often threatened to assassinate him, and had robbed him of large sums of money. The affair caused a tremendous scandal, and Madame de Tencin was arrested. Her influence, however, was sufficient to prevent the case from being brought to a public trial, and after a short detention in the Bastille, she was released, and the papers of La Fresnaye pronounced false. After this—she was then between forty and fifty—she gave up her gallantry, and devoted herself entirely to society. Her *salon* was the first of those for which the eighteenth century was remarkable, where the philosophers and men of letters were to be found, and all things of heaven and of earth were discussed. Fontenelle, by right of his years rather than of his genius, was the oracle. Montesquieu, Marivaux, Helvetius, Voltaire, were among her *habitués*. She wrote fairly good novels and sometimes said extremely good things. She it was who told Fontenelle, the coldest and least impressionable of men — he prolonged his years to a hundred by suppressing all emotions— that what he called a heart, was, in fact, only another

brain. But her *salon* belongs to a time when Aïssé was dead and buried. It is creditable to Louis XV., about whom so few creditable things are recorded, that he hated the very name of this woman. He loved so many bad women that it is something to be able to write that he hated one.

Another friend of the De Ferriol family, and a special friend of Aïssé's, was the Countess de Parabère, a woman about her own age. Of the Countess de Parabère, perhaps the less said the better. She was for a longer time than any other woman the principal favourite of the Regent. The most remarkable thing about her was the way in which she kept up her good spirits and good health. Nothing did her any harm ;. and at five in the morning, among all the jaded guests of the Regent's supper, her cheek would be as bright, her laugh as musical, and her wit as sparkling as when they began. She and the Regent esteemed each other chiefly as a pair of good fellows, convivial and congenial spirits, and capital companions for a supper-table. Moreover, she never bothered him about affairs. Politics she detested, and she would ask no favour for anyone. An unselfish, ungodly, merry little woman, full of mischief and fun, who never did harm to anyone but herself. To Aïssé, as we shall see, she even did good.

Aïssé's circle of friends, so far as we need to trace it, is completed by the names of Madame Du Deffand ;

Lord Bolingbroke and his second wife, the Marquise de Villette; the Counts Pont de Veyle and d'Argental, and the Chevalier d'Aydie.

The celebrated Du Deffand, at the time when Aïssé first entered the world of society, was a young grass-widow, separated from her husband, whom she hated, and leading a life like the rest of the circle—perfectly unrestrained by any laws but those of inclination. It was not till later that her *salon* became celebrated, and the *réunions*, at which so many philosophers and regenerators of the human race assisted, did not begin till long afterwards. Voltaire, D'Alembert, Hume, Montesquieu, and Horace Walpole, were among her friends; and it was at her house that the celebrated squabble originated between herself and Mademoiselle de Lespinasse, who was her companion. One of her longest attachments was that which she formed with Pont de Veyle, Aïssé's foster-brother, if one may call him so. Pont de Veyle was a sort of Dundreary in the style of Louis Quinze. He loved literature and letters, but he hated study. He wrote Madame de Tencin's novels for her, but would do nothing for himself. He passed through life in a sort of sad hopelessness, looking for nothing, caring for nothing, believing in nothing. Habit kept him chained to a daily visit *chez* Madame Du Deffand for more than fifty years; and a traditional conversation has been handed down which serves to show

the dreary joylessness of their friendship. It was after she had become blind.

'Pont de Veyle!' cried Madame du Deffand, 'where are you?'

'By your fireside.'

'With your feet on the hob, like an old friend?'

'Yes.'

'You must admit that very few *liaisons* have lasted so long as ours.'

'That is true.'

'It is fifty years since it began.'

'Yes; more than fifty years.'

'And in all that long time no cloud, no shadow of a storm.'

'It is what has always surprised me.'

'Don't you think, Pont de Veyle, it is because we have never cared for each other?'

'Very likely, indeed.'

The day on which he died, Madame du Deffand was taken out to pay a visit. A remark was made about him, on which she coolly said, taking a pinch of snuff: 'Yes, Pont de Veyle died to-day; otherwise I should not have been here.'

So Pont de Veyle yawned through his life. His brother, D'Argental, took a more hopeful view of things, and had more enjoyment out of his years. He, too, assisted his aunt; Madame de Tencin, in her novels, and he, too, had his amours and his amourettes. He seems to have been Aïssé's favourite,

as she talks about him a great deal more than about the others. Once she actually quarrels with him. 'Imagine,' she says, 'we who had never quarrelled before.' She was lecturing D'Argental on his neglect of his mother, when the gentleman flew into a violent rage, and refused to speak to her. The *bouderie* lasted for eight days, and then they kissed and made it up.

Bolingbroke was one of those who loved her most: he is always talking about her in his letters. 'Bring Aïssé,' he says to D'Argental. . . . 'Can't you contrive us the pleasure of seeing Aïssé?' . . . 'If only Aïssé would come!' . . . 'As for Mademoiselle Aïssé, it is no use expecting her. The Turk' (M. de Ferriol) 'will be her excuse, and a certain Christian of our acquaintance the reason.'

One word more on Madame de Tencin, and then we shall have done with the most odious of all French women '*qui ont pensé hardiment*.' The Duke of Orleans, the Regent, met Aïssé at the house of the Countess de Parabère, and, after the abominable fashion of the man, fell immediately in love with her. He did her the honour forthwith to propose giving her a place in his list of favourites. Madame de Tencin, delighted with an opportunity of increasing her own influence, and advancing the interests of her brother, the Archbishop, hurried to Aïssé with the gracious invitation of the Prince. To her unmitigated astonishment and disgust Aïssé

flatly refused. Madame de Ferriol joined her entreaties, and they pestered the poor girl until she declared that she would go into a convent if she was not left alone. Then they desisted. Madame de Tencin never, however, forgave her, doubtless feeling that the exhibition of virtue in such a *monde* as her own was as absurd as it was unexpected, amounting to a reproach, almost to an insult, to the family which had brought her up.

Reading about this state of society, we ask ourselves how it was possible for men and women to be so utterly base, selfish, and mean. But we must remember that all these stories, of which there are so many, come from the *chroniques scandaleuses;* the things they record were not done in the open ; they were known to few ; they did not take place all at once ; and perhaps the heart of French society was sounder during the worst days of the Regency than during the concluding years of Louis XV., when a frivolous and amusement-seeking *façon de vivre* had penetrated far down into strata which was generally virtuous, because they are always poor ; and society, except in those private suppers of the Regent, was generally decorous. A *liaison* might be well known, but it was not matter of public recognition ; and in the *salons* even of the Countess de Parabère conversation was conducted on the assumption of virtue, if not of religion. Leaving, then, the scandals to themselves, let us go on to talk about these people

as if they were all respectable, god-fearing, and religious, and as if their society was like a fair and pleasant garden, instead of a noisome heap of corruption, in which, amid the rank weeds and common thistles, grew, tall and stately, a single white lily—Aïssé—itself, alas! doomed to be smirched and spoiled.

It was at about the age of twenty-five that Aïssé first met the Chevalier d'Aydie. Blaise d'Aydie, younger son of a noble but impoverished family, was a 'Chevalier non profés de l'ordre de St. Jean de Jérusalem,' a Knight of St. John, and therefore under vows of celibacy. He was a young man of singular sweetness of temper and manners—handsome—his face was of the same shape, and bore a curious resemblance to that of Aïssé herself—accomplished, and endowed with a profound sense of honour. His portrait has been drawn with great care by Madame du Deffand. 'It is said of Fontenelle, that where his heart ought to be is only a second brain: one may believe that Aydie's head contains a second heart. . . . The freer the soul the easier it is to be moved. Everyone, therefore, who has the merit to deserve it may win the sympathy of the Chevalier. With him can be enjoyed the pleasure of learning what one is really worth by the sentiments he accords you, and this sort of approbation and praise is a great deal more flattering than that granted by the intellect alone, where the heart

takes no part. . . . He is too often and too easily moved for his temperament to be always equable; but this inequality is agreeable rather than the contrary. . . . Always true and natural in his various changes, he pleases by his own defects, and we should be sorry indeed if he were more perfect.'

Voltaire, too, years after, speaking of a character in one of his plays, says that he wishes to introduce upon the stage a *perfect* character—a Chevalier d'Aydie.

Blaise d'Aydie met Aïssé in the *salon* of the Countess de Parabère, and fell in love with her at first sight. She was then in the full perfection of her beauty, her cheeks still bright with health and youth, and her slender figure not yet wasted with consumption. But at first his passion received no encouragement, and he went away on service to Poland, without getting the least kind word from his mistress. On his return he renewed her acquaintance, and in a brief time found himself loved with all the passion that he could desire. 'Let us speak,' says Bolingbroke, writing to D'Argental, 'of the object of both our loves. I have just had a letter from her. When she sees you she remembers me, and I am dying of fear that when she sees me she will remember you. Alas! when she sees the Pole, she forgets both of us. Can you guess the reason of this? Give her my tender compliments, and send me news of her heart—that heart which unfolds itself before you like a flower.'

Aydie, generous and honourable, wanted to retire from his order and get a release from his vows, in order to marry her; but Aïssé refused to allow this, because it would lead to a total sacrifice of his fortunes and career. If one was to be sacrificed, it should be herself: she could never be his wife:—*soit*:—then she would be his mistress; and the white lily lost its purity. Who shall blame poor Aïssé? Among all the people with whom she had been brought up there was not one virtuous—no, not one. The man who had bought her was a worn-out libertine; the woman with whom she lived was notorious for her gallantries; the women who were her friends, Du Deffand and Parabère, *esprits forts et libres*; the woman who loved her most, the Marquise de Villette, supposed not to be married to Lord Bolingbroke; the two men whom she regarded as brothers, careless, like all the rest, of morality. From whom was she to learn that the highest sacrifice would have been the sacrifice of her love? But to her the highest sacrifice seemed to be that of her honour, and she freely gave it to preserve from loss the career of her lover. They were not happy. Aydie continually pressed her to marry him. Aïssé continually refused. She says afterwards that she never, not for an hour, not for a moment, was free from remorse — that she dared not to look the present in the face. And yet the story of their love reads like an idyll.

We learn how, when the Chevalier — it is all in Aïssé's letters, and of course there is only one Chevalier in the world for her—was on duty at Versailles, and unable to get away, except in the morning, he would gallop to Paris as hard as he could every day to see her ; how at one o'clock the little dog, Patie, begins to prick up her ears, and scratches at the door at the sound of the Chevalier's step, Aïssé's heart beating all the time. Presently we hear that he has gone away for a while, and can only see her once in three months or so, but that his letters are as tender and sweet as ever. One or two of these letters remain, the letters of the kindest-hearted of men. Unfortunately, all those of Aïssé to her lover are lost.

It was quite early in the history of their loves, in 1724, that Aïssé found herself obliged to make a confidante of some one, and to get more help than her faithful servant Sophie could give her. She chose the Bolingbrokes, as the most trustworthy of all her friends. Lord Bolingbroke concerted a plan for her. He asked Madame de Ferriol to let his wife take Aïssé for a visit to England. She consented, and they started. But they got no farther than the suburbs of Paris, where they remained for a month or so ; Bolingbroke—what a good fellow Bolingbroke was !—writing letters full of circumstantial fibs to Madame de Ferriol. 'Have you had any news yet,' asks this diplomatist, 'of Aïssé ? The

Marquise, wrote to me from Dover. They got there after a very favourable passage. The sea gave my wife only a slight headache. Aïssé, poor thing, fed the fishes during the whole voyage.' And all this time Aïssé was lying ill only five miles away, with Lady Bolingbroke and the faithful Sophie to nurse her—and Aydie's daughter in her arms.

She could not keep her child very long. It was necessary to do something with it, and the best thing that occurred was to send it to a convent at Sens-sur-Yonne, where a relation of Lady Bolingbroke was the abbess. Thither accordingly it was taken, and entered as Miss Black, the niece of Lord Bolingbroke; but it was christened Célénie le Blond. Then the two conspirators went to England, and after a decent stay returned to France, where Aïssé's secret, the property only of the Bolingbrokes, her Sophie, Aydie, and afterwards Madame Calandrini, seems never to have been suspected in her lifetime. She went back to her life of society, pale, nervous, and suffering. Her strength was sorely tried by the suppression of all the maternal instincts, and her conscience bitterly reproached her. Presently she makes the acquaintance of Madame Calandrini, whose sister had married Lord Bolingbroke's father. She is a lady from Geneva, with rigid principles, and for the first time in her life Aïssé receives counsels from a woman which are other than worldly and selfish. She is advised to

tear out from her heart that love which is a part of her existence, and she endeavours to obey. Her struggles are depicted in a series of letters—the most delightful ever written—which she sent to Madame Calandrini, and in which she pours out unreservedly the whole story of her thoughts and inward life. The letters are full of a sweet melancholy when the writer speaks of her love, of her regrets, sorrow, and repentance: 'Why, oh why, did I not know you before? Why were you not Madame de Ferriol?' But when she comes to talk of other things, she is bright, sprightly, gay, and even malicious.

In these letters we read how her life passed by, to outward seeming, a stream of gentle current and smooth surface, without accident, without incident, but really with an under-current of whirlpool and tempest that killed her at last. Loving and loved, she could not rest in the thought, once awakened, that her love was guilty. And yet she could not leave Aydie. There was the *pauvre petite*, too, to consider; it was a bond of union between them; they were bound to care for and consider the child. She thinks about her lover and her poor little girl when she ought to be thinking about her sins. 'I am harassed by the idea you know of. . . . You yourself developed it in me. I have not the courage for it; my reason, your counsels, are much less efficacious with me than my own passion.'

And not only that, but the Chevalier's love knew no abatement.

'He loves me more tenderly than ever. His letters are always like those which I showed you in the coach.'

It was his love which she thought of, as well as her own. How was she to make him unhappy?

The struggle lasted long, but the victory was won at last, and Aydie gave her with his own hands, after a long and tearful interview, a letter of release, from which the following is an extract:

'Your letter, my dear Aïssé, touches more than it saddens me. . . . I can complain of nothing since you promise always to love me. I confess I have not the same principles as yourself, but I am still farther removed from the spirit of proselytism, and I think it right that everyone should act according to the light of his own conscience. . . . Be tranquil, be happy, dear Aïssé; it matters nothing by what means: all are tolerable, provided they do not drive me from your heart. . . . Be persuaded that I love you as tenderly as possible, and as purely as you can desire. . . . I will be only and exactly what you wish me to be, and in the resolution you have taken it is enough to assure you of my submission and the constancy of my attachment in all the terms that you please to ask, without letting you see the tears which I cannot keep from falling.'

But let us look at the gayer side of her letters.

She grumbles at the economy of Madame de Ferriol's household:

'The *cuisine* is going from bad to worse. There is nothing to retrench at the high table, because there is nothing on it—no, nothing at all. . . . They are now beginning to retrench the servants' table, and I fully believe it will be with us as with the horse which the man wanted to live without food, and with that object cut down his corn by half every day. The poor animal died. *So shall we.*'

She tells how the horrible Madame de Tencin has at last declared open war with her, and will not dine with her sister till she has previously ascertained that Aïssé is dining somewhere else. She gives an amusing story of her first love, with the Duke de Grèves, when they were both ten years old, and how it was broken off. She tells how she has lost half her little fortune; how she has quarrelled with D'Argental, and how unhappy it makes her; how she really cannot help liking Madame de Parabère—*quand même*—because she is always so kind to her—kindness always conquers Aïssé; how the actresses have been wrangling; how there is talk of war—'Our cavaliers desire it vehemently, and the ladies are only moderately afflicted: it is a long time since they have had the excitement of the terrors and pleasures of a campaign; they want to see how much they will be distressed by the absence of their lovers.' She is even a little prophetess, and tells her friend, this Circassian Cassandra, very gravely, that 'Everything in this monarchy portends its destruction.' There is nothing very remarkable about this

prediction; which, all through the eighteenth century, was a sort of commonplace. Madame de Tencin said that nothing but a miracle could save things from being turned upside down. It was the talk of the *salons*. What one expects to happen, generally does happen; that is, if we had not good reason to believe it to be going to happen we should certainly not look for it.

Then she tells the stories of the day—one of them with an enjoyment and display of pretty malice that is quite delightful. It is pleasant to think that Aïssé was not perpetually weeping and making moan over an irretrievable past; the most contrite of sinners may surely sometimes wipe his eyes, and take a look round to see how things are getting on. Afterwards, as Aïssé does, he may return to his contrition.

The story is of a certain venerable canon of Notre Dame, a great controversialist, a Jansenist, and the terror of the opposite party. He had attained the mature age of seventy-five, having always lived a blameless and pious life; but he had been heard to remark that, above all things, he should like to see a play, and his servant observed that he kept in a cupboard, for no reason discoverable, certain articles of feminine apparel which had formerly belonged to his grandmother. Now, a dress which belongs to the grandmother of a priest of seventy-five carries the imagination back a good

long way. One fatal evening, curiosity at last getting the better of prudence, and the embers of desire being fanned into a flame, the reverend sage, by the assistance of his servant, dressed himself in his grandmother's clothes, 'with all the *falbalas*,' says Aïssé, contemptuous of ancient fashion, 'that they used to wear in those dark ages,' and proceeded to gratify his carnal longings after a comedy by going to the theatre in this preposterous disguise. He had not been five minutes in the place, the poor old man, when his quaint appearance excited first a murmur and then a tumult. One of the players whispered to him to get out of the house as soon as possible, and the canon scuttled away. Unfortunately, there were two doors, one into the street and the other into a hall where was stationed an *exempt*. By the worst possible luck, the Jansenist took the latter door, and was promptly arrested and taken before the lieutenant of police. This officer happened *not to be a Jansenist*, and, being delighted with his capture, made a great scandal out of the matter, banishing the peccant theologian for thirty miles out of Paris, for fear that his aged morals should receive another shock. It was a tragic ending to so many years of honour and reverence.

The gaiety of her letters, their brightness and their hope, are always moderated by the remembrance of the Chevalier and her child—*la pauvre petite*. One of her letters is full of a visit she had

paid to Sens, to see 'Lord Bolingbroke's niece.' She could go very seldom, and then was obliged to restrain herself from too great show of affection, in order to avoid suspicion. Sophie used to go oftener, and bring back reports.

'You have no idea,' she writes, 'how the child loves me. She was so seized with joy at seeing me that she was nearly making herself ill. Judge of what I felt when I saw her; my emotion was all the more painful because I had to hide it. . . . She would not let me go; and yet when I sent her away, she went *d'une douceur extrême*.' Poor mother! poor child! It was the last time they saw each other. For all this passion, this smothered love, was too much for Aïssé's delicate frame, and her health began to give way. Towards the close of the year 1733 she sank rapidly, and very soon could no more leave her bed. Her friends did not desert her. Voltaire himself sent her a present of ratafia, with the following verse:

'Va, porte dans son sang la plus subtile flamme:
Change en désirs ardents la glace de son cœur;
Et qu'elle sente la chaleur
Du feu qui brûle dans mon âme.'

The lines are charmingly appropriate to the dying moments of a repentant and Christian woman! But the superfine manners of the time required a man to be always professing devotion and a woman to be always ready to receive homage; and when

the shadow of Death appeared it was etiquette to take no notice, and to make believe that the Presence was not there. And then there occurred a singular and almost unique proof of friendship. Poor Aïssé desired a confessor, and to make her peace with Heaven. Repentance, indeed, the first step, she had shown long before. The only persons she could find to help her in this emergency were those two heathens and infidels, those unrepentant Magdalens, Parabère and Du Deffand. The former never left her bedside, except to take out Madame de Ferriol, and so to rid Aïssé of her presence; and both did all they could to find for their dying friend exactly what she wanted—not a fashionable confessor, but a pious and good priest, who would hear the truth and tell the truth. After a search they found such a one, and Aïssé obtained relief. She tells the story of her own death-bed in her two last letters—they are lit up still with her sad smile:

'The Chevalier does not deceive himself for a moment; yet he has anxieties so keen, agitations so painful, that it makes the tears come into the eyes of those who see them. . . . I must tell you that nothing can equal the state of grief and fear in which he is plunged. It would make you pity him; everybody is so touched with it, they do nothing but try to reassure him. He thinks that by making presents among my people he will restore me to life. He has given to everybody in the house, beginning with the cow, for whom he brings hay. One gets a present to enable him to teach his boy a trade; another to buy ribbons and

things ; and so on all through. And when I asked him what was the good of all these presents, he replied, "To oblige everybody round you to take care of you."'

She loved him then, still, as fondly as ever, and repented not of her love at all ; but was only sorry that such love had been sinful. Did a woman ever repent of love ?

'I give myself up to my Creator. I labour in earnest to forget my passion. . . . If you lose that person who of all the world loved you most, think that you have laboured to effect her happiness in the next world. . . . As for my soul, I hope that next Sunday it will be delivered of all its sins. . . . I shall accuse myself of every fault. . . .'

* * * * *

'It is eight days since Père Bourceaux received my confession. The step that I have taken has given my soul a calm that I should not have now, had I remained in my errors. . . . I do not speak to you of the Chevalier : he is in despair at seeing me so ill. No one has ever heard of a passion with more delicacy, generosity, and nobleness. I am not anxious for the *petite* ; she will have a friend and protector who loves her tenderly. . . . Adieu, dear madam : I have no more strength to write. . . . The life that I have led has been wretched indeed. Have I ever enjoyed a moment's joy ? Why should I be terrified at death, since I am persuaded that God is altogether good, and that the first moment when I shall enjoy true happiness will be that when I leave this miserable body ?'

These are the last words of Aïssé. She died a day or two after writing the letter. The Chevalier

went in sadness for her till the day of his death, which took place thirty years later. The child grew up, graceful and lovely as her mother, but not so unhappy. She married and had children, and the descendants of the fair Circassian still survive in the family of Bonneval.

In the annals of an inconceivably bad time, among people mixed up with the worst and most wicked, themselves the worst and most wicked, is found the tender and pathetic story which I have clumsily sketched. It is the old, old story of a man and a woman. They dwell for a brief space in the Garden of Delight, with Love for their companion. Presently they are driven out, for none but the innocent can remain there, and go forth into a world of regret; but yet not without some consolation, for Love goes with them, and they still can wander, hand in hand, till one is taken. Then he who is left laments her who has gone all the days of his life.

[1871.]

OVER JOHNSON'S GRAVE.

A CAUSERIE

ON the morning of Monday, December 20, 1784, the remains of Dr. Johnson were carried along Fleet Street and the Strand to Westminster Abbey in solemn procession, with a hearse and six and a long train of mourning coaches. The Abbey was full of people, whose behaviour, says the chronicle, 'was marked by the decency suitable to the solemn occasion.'

The Rev. Dr. Taylor, senior prebendary, rector of St. Margaret's, Westminster, and vicar of Ashbourne, who had been a schoolfellow of Johnson, read the service in the absence of the Dean. The pall-bearers were Johnson's old and much-loved friends, Edmund Burke, Sir Joseph Banks, Bennet Langton, William Windham, Sir Charles Bunbury, and George Colman. Among the principal mourners stood Sir Joshua Reynolds, then sixty-one years of age, and with eight years more of life and work before him. The body was placed next to that of David Garrick, at the foot of the Shakespeare monument in Poets' Corner.

When that coffin was lowered into the grave, one able to read the outward signs of coming change might have seen buried with it the whole of the eighteenth-century literature, as Johnson understood literature, and not to speak of frivolous productions such as those of Fielding and Smollett, who had also gone before. After Johnson's name in the list of English poets, scholars, and essayists may be drawn a thick black line such as in railway guides they use to indicate that here the train stops. Johnson's train of literature, which started merrily with Pope, Addison, Steele, and a glorious company of wits, had been running slowly of late, and was now come to a final stop. Not only was the old order changing, as happens continually, by the laws of being, but it was completely dead, and its successor as yet was not born. There was to be no more literature of the old school: nothing worth reading on the old lines was to be published; the world must wait until the new men should begin their work with new thoughts, new ways of looking at things, and new forms of expression. Those who had been the leaders in the old order had all passed away before the middle of the century. Of their successors—Johnson being one—Richardson died in 1761, Thomson in 1748, Akenside in 1770, Collins in 1756, Goldsmith in 1774, Gray in 1771, Garrick in 1779, Hume in 1776, Churchill in 1764. Cowper's work was practically

finished—the 'Task' was already written, though not published till 1785; Sheridan's was also finished; Gibbon's, it is true, was only partly published, and Burke had still something to say; and far away in Scotland a country lad was singing as no Scot had ever sung before, but his song had not yet reached the southern ear. In sixteen years' time the new school would have begun with Wordsworth, Coleridge, and Southey; Walter Scott would be feeling his way with translations; Shelley and Byron would be boys at school; Keats, Carlyle, and Keble would be already born in the world.

Let us not concern ourselves in this place about literature and its history. Those who want to consider Johnson's place among English writers, and the characteristics of his style, may sit down and read Mr. Leslie Stephen's little book about him. Let us talk of smaller things; let us have *causerie*; it shall be concerning the man and his friends, their ways and their times. As for the latter, the eighteenth century seems hundreds of years ago, so different are its ways compared with our ways, and its thoughts compared with ours. Between us lies the French Revolution, with —the most wonderful event in all history—the transference of power to the people. In Johnson's times the people were still only the Mob; a grub, wriggling, formless, without legs or wings, apparently

without understanding, possessed of the simple appetites and elementary passions, certainly greedy and voracious, supposed by some to be dangerous, but hitherto dangerous only when, as in the Gordon riots, it could be got to act with one mind. To most men who discussed the subject the Mob was not dangerous, because it was too stupid, too ignorant, too apathetic, too brutish, to act in concert. What is it now?

It is like a dream to read of the things which happened and the things which were said and thought in those years, because they are so far off, and now so impossible. And yet every man over fifty years of age may very well have talked with men who remembered these things, with men who may have stood in the Abbey and seen the coffin of the great scholar carried through the west gates. Why, I myself have talked with one who was a drummer-boy to La Rochejaquelin, and I have known men who fought with Nelson at Copenhagen and Trafalgar, and I have actually gazed upon one who was once a page to Marie Antoinette—he was too far gone in senile decay for speech—but I have never had the good fortune to meet with any who had talked with Johnson or seen any of his friends. Stay: once, in a country inn, an aged man told me at great length, and with an infinity of windings, turns, harkings back, and episodes, a story. He was once, a long time ago, he said, a child, and in the

days of his childhood there was once, he remembered, some kind of fête or rejoicing at which he was present. A gentleman who was there took him into his arms and kissed him. 'My dear,' said the gentleman kindly, 'you will now be able to tell your children that you have been kissed by the great Boswell.' 'Pray, Mr. Boswell,' said a lady (and I do think it was a most cruel thing to say)—'pray, Mr. Boswell, why are you great?' A story like this seems to give one a kind of connection, not granted to all the world, with the last century, because Boswell died in the year 1795.

In the year 1784, while Johnson was slowly and painfully breathing his last, a good many things, now curious and interesting to read of, are recorded to have happened. Thus, on July 7 of that year, William Bishopp, town crier (they spelled it 'cryer') of the city, 'attended by proper officers'—one can plainly see two beadles with wigs, gold-headed sticks, and long coats, and perhaps an officer in green and gold from the Lord Mayor's household—went to the Royal Exchange, and there by order read two royal proclamations. The first of these announced that a treaty of peace had been signed at Paris between Great Britain, France, and the United States of America. No doubt, after the history of the past ten years, any peace was welcome. The next proclamation called upon all the King's loyal subjects and citizens of London to observe a solemn

day of thanksgiving on July 29. That day was doubtless held with closed shops, ringing of church bells, and services. After church the 'Prentices most certainly made holiday. Since it is agreed among all nations that a *Te Deum* must be sung for a victory, something ought to be sung or said for defeat and shame, if only to thank Heaven that the thing is no worse, and to pray for statesmen with more wisdom. Perhaps there were in the city churches some clergymen who explained why we ought to thank Heaven at all times, even for wooden-headed ministers and an obstinate king who had forced rebellion upon the American colonists, and embroiled the country at the same time with France, Spain, and Holland; for generals who had made British armies lay down their arms; and for the judicial blindness which had fallen upon some of the best and wisest in the land—even upon Samuel Johnson. To my own mind, speaking as a plain Englishman, no misfortune that ever befell this nation approaches in magnitude our great misfortune in losing America. It will be amended and repaired some day: on that day—still, I fear, in the distant future—when there shall be set up for all time to come a great confederation of all English-speaking nations, when England and Scotland, the United States, Canada, Australia, New Zealand, and the Isles, will form one nation, as England and Scotland, or Illinois and California, form one nation. This

confederation once formed, it seems as if it would matter nothing at all what was done outside. I wonder if that dream came to any of the sober citizens who heard that proclamation, and went to church on thanksgiving day to offer the sacrifice of praise and gratitude for shame and defeat? It is very well known that Johnson would hear of nothing but war and revenge. 'I am willing to love all mankind *except an American*,' he cried in 1778. 'Rascals! robbers! pirates! I would burn and destroy them!' Quoth Miss Seward, who was present, 'Sir, this is an instance that we are always most violent against those whom we have injured.'

Again, in this year, they worked off very nearly a hundred convicts upon the shameful gallows-tree. On June 15 there was a grand field-day, when fifteen were hanged together before an enormous concourse of people. Twelve of them were burglars; two had committed street robberies; one had obtained another man's pay under false pretences. The mind of the city must have been greatly comforted that day with the assurance that there were now fifteen burglars and thieves less in London. Those who were respited after the capital sentence were transported across the seas, and as the late unnatural conduct of the colonists now made Virginia no longer possible, they were sent to the Cape Coast.

As regards the literature and art of this year, the

last of Johnson's life, the only books thought worthy of mention are three books of travels—viz., Cook's 'Voyages,' Coxe's 'Travels in Poland and Russia,' and Swinburne's 'Travels in the Two Sicilies.' The Poet Laureate, to be sure, produced two or three immortal odes. That for the New Year contains the following remarkable prophecy, the fulfilment of which we still await with anxious hope:

> 'Two Britons through th' admiring world
> Shall wing their way with sails unfurled;
> Each from the other kindred state
> Avert by turns the bolts of fate;
> And acts of mutual amity endear
> The Tyre and Carthage of a wider sphere.'

The Royal Academy was held as usual—how many of us remember that Johnson was its first Professor of Ancient Literature?—and a Handel commemoration was celebrated in Westminster Abbey and the Pantheon, which produced the sum of £12,000.

There is no man who has ever lived whose life and opinions are so thoroughly well known as Johnson's. We seem to know exactly what he would think and what he would say at any given juncture. There was such a vein of prejudice and obstinacy in him that one feels certain he would always think substantially in the same way. Everybody, too, thinks he knows Johnson. Macaulay has written about him in a spirit horribly unjust to Bozzy; Carlyle has written about him; his life was written

by Hawkins as well as by Boswell; Mrs. Piozzi published anecdotes of him; quantities of his letters have been published. This being so, it may naturally be supposed that there is nothing new to say about him. Let me, however, correct one false impression concerning him by reference to facts. I want, in fact, to destroy the common belief that Johnson for many years had to fight with the direst poverty. For five-and-twenty years—*i.e.*, between the years 1737 and 1761—Johnson lived mainly by his pen, but not quite. His patrimony, it is true, was but £20 in all, but his wife brought him the respectable sum of £800, which at 5 per cent. would produce £40 a year. Now, at a time when, as is illustrated by the history of Johnson's friend the painter from Ireland, it was possible for a man to live, present a respectable appearance, and enjoy something of society for £30 a year, the addition of £40 a year to one's earnings could hardly be thought inconsiderable. Certainly its purchasing power in the year 1740 would be equivalent to that of £100 a year at the present day. Johnson himself tells us how cheaply it was possible to dine. He had beef and bread for sevenpence, and gave the waiter a penny. The other frequenters of the Pine-Apple, New Street, had wine as well, and so their dinner cost them a shilling. Remember, however, that these days of leanness were those of his first journey to town, when he was looking about him. When

his wife joined him they took good lodgings, were always well housed, and we hear no more of eightpenny dinners. Breakfast on bread and milk might be had for a penny.

It was towards the close of 1737 that he settled in town. In 1738 he brought out his satire, 'London,' for which he received ten guineas. He got steady employment on the *Gentleman's Magazine* from the beginning, and appears to have received for the first eight months of his work the sum of £49 7s., which is at the rate of £65 a year. His income, therefore, in his very first year of literary work amounted in all to a hundred guineas. I maintain that for the year 1738 this was a very respectable income for a beginner in any profession, and quite enough for a couple who had no children, no pretension of rank or style, and no more expensive establishment than a lodging of two rooms. Moreover, it does not appear that he ever did worse than this; on the other hand, he did better and better every year. Johnson was certainly a hack, but he was not a starveling hack; he stepped at once above the level of the Grub Street poet. Why, only a year or two later we find him taking upon his own shoulders a debt of £12 due by his mother, and promising that it should be paid in two months. Is there ever a starveling young hack in modern Grub Street able to pay off a debt of £12—that is to say, something like £40 of our money—in two

months? As for his walking about the streets all night with Savage because they had no lodgings, that seems a ridiculous after-thought, because at least he had his wife's lodgings. It may certainly have been at the time when Mrs. Johnson was living at Hampstead, but so sensible a man as Johnson would have reflected that it is less fatiguing to walk four miles up the Tottenham Court Road, and so to bed, than to walk for the whole night round and round St. James's Square.

As regards the value of money at the time, a curious illustration is afforded by the history of what Bennet Langton's uncle, Peregrine Langton, achieved on £200 a year, which was his whole fortune. He lived in a house in Lincolnshire for which he paid a rent of £28 a year; there were attached to it two or three fields, which were a loss rather than a gain to him; his household consisted of his sister (who paid him £18 for her board), himself, two men-servants, and two maids. He kept as good a table as any plain country gentleman, with three or four dishes every day for dinner, he gave away the tenth of his income for charity, he saved some of his money, and he kept three horses in his stables. It is remarked, in part explanation of so much being got out of so little, that he was extremely careful to pay ready money for everything, and looked personally into his daily expenditure. Those two men-servants and maids, we may be sure, were not suffered

to devour and to waste. Deducting the rent and tithe for charity, this good man had only £170 a year for everything, including three horses—about £3 5s. 4½d. a week, or less than 10s. a day, for food, wine, dress, wages, and the daily small expenses of a household. Washing, baking, brewing, gardening, carpentering and house work generally, would all be done at home. The fields would supply hay for the horses; there would be cows for butter, milk, and cheese, pigs, fowls, turkeys, pigeons, geese, and ducks; but, all deductions made, how could the wages and the keep of these four servants be found, with the three or four dishes for the dinner, and the wine to set before company—no doubt home-made wines were used when there was none else—out of £170 a year? Johnson, however, though he was never rich, could not have felt any real pinch of poverty; he never made a large income by literature, but enough to enable him to gratify any reasonable wish.

The much-abused 'booksellers' of the day have, I think, had scant justice done them, when we consider the wretched stuff they published and paid for. One thing is greatly to their credit: they always did pay everybody whose work they produced, even if they paid him little. There *are* publishers at the present day who do not obey that golden rule. Goldsmith is said to have made in one year as much as £1,800. Johnson bargained for £1,575 for his Dictionary;

he did in reality get more, but he had to pay his assistants, and the work was spread over seven years. During that period he brought out his 'Irene,' and published the 'Vanity of Human Wishes' and the 'Rambler.' For the poem he received fifteen guineas; I do not know what he received for the 'Rambler.' As for his 'Irene,' it ran for thirteen nights. The author had the third, the sixth, and the ninth nights, producing in all £195 17s.; he also got £100 with the manuscript, so that his thirteen nights' run gave him close upon £300. At the present day, if he received five guineas a night, he would only get sixty-five guineas in all. But a play which now runs for thirteen nights only is a wretched failure. For the 'Lives of the Poets' he himself asked two hundred guineas, which was probably much less than he might have asked and obtained. Dyer, for instance, received £200 for his revision of Plutarch; and Hawkesworth is said by Hawkins, but one cannot possibly believe it, to have received £6,000 for his account of the South Sea discoveries. Johnson had worked so long at low prices that he knew not his true value.

Of course Johnson was far above the level of the Grub Street hack. That is true as regards his method, his style, and the consideration with which he was regarded from the beginning. But yet he was a bookseller's hack nearly all his life, in the sense that he lived by finding out subjects which the

public may be supposed to like, and writing on those subjects. The list of his writings is full of such things. It is hack-work pure and simple, undeniable hack-work, which, had it not been for necessity, would not have been written at all. A popular novelist, it may be generally observed, produces his books in a certain sandwich fashion; first, a good book, showing art, study, and inspiration; then a poor book, showing art without study and with no inspiration: then another good book. In the one he is an artist, a Maker; in the other he is a hack. Johnson was nearly always the hack, who would have written few indeed of his productions had there not been the little pile of George II. guineas at the end of the work. Here, for instance, is a list of writings for the year 1741, when he should have been at his most anxious and ambitious time. He wrote in this year, all for the *Gentleman's Magazine* —I take it from Boswell's list:

'A Preface.'

'Essay on the Account of the Conduct of the Duchess of Marlborough.'

'An Account of the Life of Peter Burman.'

'The Life of Sydenham.'

'Proposals for Printing a Catalogue of the Library of the Earl of Oxford.'

'Abridgment entitled "Foreign History."'

'Essay on the Description of China from the French of Du Halde.'

There is hardly anything in the whole list, whether of this or following years, which we can suppose that he would have done from free choice. Lives of men in whom he was either not interested or not especially qualified to write, translations from the French, reviews of books, dedications, introductions, and prefaces: perhaps the only contributions to literature which appear to have been spontaneous were the 'Rambler,' the 'Idler,' 'Rasselas,' 'London,' the 'Vanity of Human Wishes,' and 'Irene.' As for the Dictionary, the editions of Shakespeare, and the 'Lives of the Poets,' most assuredly not one of them would have been produced had not Johnson been compelled to prepare them. It seems to me, then, returning to the question of payment, that, considering the nature of the work done by Johnson —I mean that it was purely pot-boiling work—he was paid very well. We must also consider the time at which he wrote, and the money made in other professions. In the first half of the eighteenth century the country was poor; the great development of English trade was only beginning; no one was highly paid; the general standard of living, except for people of rank and wealth, was very simple. All Government places were bestowed by interest and favour; some of them were bought and sold; the best of them were sinecures. As for the Church, its revenues were wasted among pluralists—any man might be a pluralist who was a Master of Arts. A

man who entered the Church without family interest or connection would very possibly spend the whole of his days in the abject poverty of a country curacy. If he became a schoolmaster, which no one would do unless compelled by poverty, he would have to become an usher, and live with the boys day and night, unless one could succeed with a private school, which Johnson made a feeble and unavailing attempt to do. As for medicine, there was as little opening then as now. The way to acquire a *clientèle* was first to take a political side—it mattered little which—to frequent the coffee-houses of your own party, to be seen daily, to learn and practise every obsequious and crawling art which dishonours a man, and so, by slow degrees, to attract and secure patrons. Then to be sure, as now, if a man succeeded, he was enabled to make a very large income. Mead, for instance, used to clear £7,000 a year by his profession. This, which is equivalent to a very much larger sum in our money, seems better than any living London physician is able to do. As a surgeon —but the history of Roderick Random teaches us how a young surgeon might fare. In his attempt to get private practice the young medical man had to face three rivals, who together were too much for him. These were the apothecary, the herbalist, and the quack.

If the Church, the school, and medicine presented no opening for a poor lad of parts, what remained?

The law?—But the bar was as hopeless to one who had neither money nor friends as medicine. The lower branch of the profession?—I wish someone would throw light upon the kind of men who thus became attorneys, the cost of entering the profession, and the road to success. There are a good many attorneys in English literature toward the end of the eighteenth century, and they are not represented as a delightful body of men, but rather the reverse. The army?—But commissions and promotions in that most corrupt and venal of periods were entirely matters of favouritism and purchase. The navy?—You might remain for forty years a midshipman, without interest. The colonies?—Emigration from England to America in the fifty years preceding the revolt of the colonies seems to have stopped almost altogether. Trade?—The City of London was the closest corporation in the world; no place where the young beginner would find it more difficult to start. Art?—There was always some chance, even in the dullest time, for a portrait-painter, but outside the 'family piece,' English patronage does not seem to have offered brilliant prospects to English painters. Acting?—The actor might succeed or he might not. If he did, he was not paid highly; if he did not, he starved. In either case his profession was regarded as hopelessly low, undignified, and unworthy. Johnson himself would never suffer Garrick to be made a member of the Literary Club. I am

convinced that Johnson, with no family connections at all to help him, no degree, and no money, did, in adopting the profession of literature, better for himself than if he had taken orders, gone to the bar, become a physician, or remained a schoolmaster. He was a bookseller's hack. But he was an honest workman, who retained his self-respect, and never advocated for money a cause which he did not approve.

Of his friends much has been written. He was a man who could not live without his friends. Love and sympathy were as necessary to this rough and rugged man as to any sentimental girl. But he gave far more than he received. He had friends of every degree, from the courtly Beauclerk, the scholarly Langton, Reynolds the painter, Thrale the brewer, down to Levett the quack doctor, and Frank Barber the negro. Nay, he had friends among the very unfortunates of the town, whose lives he rebuked, and whom he exhorted to turn from their ways while he relieved their wants from his ever open purse. He was always giving. If a man wanted advice, instruction, consolation, or money, he went to Johnson for it, and never came empty away. The eighteenth century is full of contrasts. There is nothing in it more wonderful than its inexhaustible benevolence side by side with its cruelties and brutalities. Pillory, stocks, the cruel lash, the hopeless debtor's prison, justice with tiger claws,

the comprehensive gallows, and apparently unconscious of these things, ignorant that they need not be, Johnson, his great heart full of tender pity and sympathy, giving with both hands.

It is conventional to represent the eighteenth century as a time of leisure and quiet happiness; when a poet writes about this time he tries to breathe into his verse an atmosphere of peace; he does his best to throw into the poem a calm of the soul. Then people applaud the poet for catching so wonderfully the very spirit of the time. Well, I cannot, for my own part, find anywhere in England, during the last century, anything at all to justify this belief in the universal leisure. The eighteenth century was a desperately turbulent, dangerous, hard-working, poorly paid time; it was torn by continual contests and struggles, by party faction, and by civil wars; it began with a long war, and it ended with a long war. England had three civil wars: two at home and one in her colonies. The press-gang was busy in every port; the recruiting sergeant in every country town; the floggings, by which discipline was maintained, seem almost incredible; the iniquities of the Government—not on this or that side, but on both sides—the jobbing, buying of places, sinecures, pluralities, nepotism, simony, as we read them now, appear simply intolerable. If there was no rest or peace without there was little within. Religious men who were affected by a weakness of

faith simply tortured their lives. Johnson, always praying and meditating, dreaded death with a constant fear which poisoned at least twenty years of his life. Cowper, after a life spent in religious exercises, died in 'despair unutterable.' No peace or quiet anywhere, save, perhaps, in some quiet cathedral close, where the canons, keeping aloof from controversy, dozed away their harmless lives as still they do; or outside the little country towns, where, to quiet women and retired men, the seasons passed then, as they may still pass, unvexed by questions, doubt, or thought of danger or of change. But as regards the life of action, the life among one's fellows, the only life worth having, the life of London, it must have been filled and perpetually troubled by the pain of witnessing continual injustice and needless suffering, the stupid engagements in war after war, with no end and no settlement, and the noisy struggle of opposing opinions, in which every man must play his part. But leisure, peace, and quiet—these things I cannot find.

[1891.]

THE FIRST SOCIETY OF BRITISH AUTHORS (1843)

I DO not know that any account of this Society—ambitious, but short-lived—has ever been published, save in a Manchester paper, where, three or four months ago, an article appeared giving a brief narrative of this very curious and instructive episode in literary history. I have quite lately been able to secure the whole of the papers which have been preserved, and I propose to place on record, in a shape more enduring and accessible than a daily paper, the story of a movement begun before the time was ripe, conducted without appreciation of what was wanted, and ending in failure. To those of us who have revived that attempt under more favourable conditions and with fuller knowledge, and, indeed, to all who have any interest in the welfare of literature and its followers, the story is full of interest and of instruction.

It all took place in the year 1843. The complaints of British authors as to their treatment by American pirates and by their own publishers had

arrived at that acute stage when it was felt that something must be attempted. The number of publishing firms was at the time—English and Scotch—less than twelve, of which five or six survive and flourish at the present day, though the enormous increase of the trade has since then multiplied twentyfold the number of those who profess to publish new books. The methods of publication were then practically only two: either the publisher undertook the cost of production and demanded half the profits for his share, or the publisher bought the manuscript. A third method, which, for reasons into which one need not enter, was not popular, was that in which the author paid for the production and the publisher was paid commission. It was not a good time either for authors or for publishers. There were, it is true, great men in the field—Dickens, Thackeray (then just beginning to be known), Tennyson, Browning, Wordsworth, Carlyle, Milman, Hallam, Leigh Hunt, Douglas Jerrold; but those of the lower rank were few and feeble. As for the trade, their market, which now reaches round the whole world, was practically confined to the shores of the British Isles. As for the methods of publishing, especially the so-called half-profit system, everybody grumbled and everybody made epigrams. 'I like the half-profit system,' said Douglas Jerrold, 'because it never leads to any division between author and

publisher.' Unfortunately a profound ignorance of everything connected with their own trade, such as the cost of printing, paper, binding, advertising, and wholesale prices, made the murmurings of the authors as useless as the rolling of distant thunder. There were other grievances of the time: if a man brought out a successful story in parts, the literary thief lay in wait ready to anticipate his next part—'Martin Chuzzlewit' was actually finished in this way by half a dozen hands; if a man saw a chance for a play in a novel, he stole that novel—plot, dialogue, and all—and made his play out of it; he can do so still for anything the law will say, but he must first find a theatrical manager as unscrupulous as himself, which is, happily, not so easy. And there was then, as now, the great American grievance.

When Charles Dickens went to the United States in 1842 and received a reception such as the Republic had never before accorded to any other visitor, he astonished his hosts by uplifting his voice and speaking his mind with plainness and fulness on the enormity of their piracies, 'as if,' he says, 'I had been twelve feet high.' In that chosen land of freedom, where there was then, as he says, no freedom permitted, either of speech or of opinion, everybody agreed with him, but everybody implored him to say no more upon the subject. Alas! it is still as it was in those days—everybody sheds tears

for the man robbed and stripped of his raiment, and everybody begs him to say nothing about it. It seemed, however, in those days, as if something would actually come out of all this outspoken indignation, then quite new, unexpected, and overwhelming. Our American friends are by this time accustomed to the gentle word of three letters, and it produces no effect; but in those days the truth went home to them, and many an honest American boiled with wrath and shame under charges which could neither be defended nor denied. Therefore, many good men thought with reason that something would be done. In fact, a petition was drawn up, signed by all the best American writers, Washington Irving at their head, which Dickens himself presented to Mr. Clay. But nothing did come of the petition. Why? Forty-five years ago there was in the United States no Irish Question, the publishers' interests were small, the whole voice of American authors was in favour of honesty. Yet nothing came of the petition. Why? There could be but one reason—the blind, unreasoning, baseless hatred of Great Britain which has always animated the Government of the States. Then, as now, the private friendships between Englishmen and Americans, whenever they met, became numerous and cordial. There was then no difference, as now, between men of the two countries, in opinion as to right and justice. There was no desire then, as

now, on the part of American men of honour, for anything but the most sincere friendship, justice, and brotherhood. And it was then, as now, the Government, and not the better class, which could not rise above the level of the pettifogging attorney. Carlyle wrote to Dickens concerning his advocacy :

'Several years ago,' he said, 'I was one of many English writers who, under the auspices of Miss Martineau, did already sign a petition to Congress praying for an international copyright between the two nations—which, properly, are not two nations, but one; indivisible by Parliament, Congress, or any kind of human law or diplomacy, being already united by Heaven's Act of Parliament and the everlasting law of Nature and Fact. . . . In an ancient book it was thousands of years ago written down in the most decisive and explicit manner "Thou *shalt not* steal." That thou belongest to a different "nation," and canst steal without certainly being hanged for it, gives thee no permission to steal! Thou shalt *not* in any wise steal at all.'

Dickens returned to England full of the subject. He was young, he was strong, he thought that an injustice only required to be stated and understood in order to be redressed. He would so state this injustice that it should no longer have the least chance of survival; he would kill it by agitation; he would call his friends together and make them agitate.

At the same moment—I think unfortunately,

because his mind was not just then clear enough to perceive that here was an evil greater, more pressing, and more easily to be remedied—he made a startling discovery. This was nothing short of the fact that his publishers had been making a fortune out of his books while he had not. Nothing so stimulates a sense of injustice as a personal wrong. He raged and fumed; he talked over the subject with other men; he found them full of bitterness, though they had so much less cause of complaint, and he agreed to join with them in an attempt to effect, by combination, a remedy for the wrongs of himself and his fraternity.

The founders of this combination first met in some informal preliminary manner, of which no record has been kept. They formed themselves, also in an unknown and unremembered manner, into an association, to be called the Society of British Authors; they nominated a Provisional Committee, consisting of the original founders, and they called their first formal meeting at the British Hotel, Cockspur Street. At this meeting Thomas Campbell took the chair. No report preserves the names of those present, but the speakers were Thomas Carlyle, Sir Edward Lytton Bulwer, Mr. Poole, and Mr. Westland Marston. Mr. John Robertson, afterwards editor of the *Westminster Review*, read a draft prospectus, and a subcommittee, consisting of Carlyle, Campbell, Bulwer, Robert Bell, Charles

Mackay, John Britton, and John Robertson was appointed to consider and revise this prospectus.

A second meeting was held on April 8, 1843, at which Charles Dickens took the chair. Those present all signed their names on a paper, which has been preserved, and is in my possession. They are as follows: Thomas Stone, M.D., John Forster, Laman Blanchard, George A. Wingfield, R. Shelton Mackenzie, Charles Mackay, J. W. Marston, George Godwin, junr., William Tooke, M. H. Barker, Bayle Bernard, Charles Dickens, John Auldjo, Gardner Wilkinson, John A. Heraud, J. S. Buckingham, S. C. Hall, Robert Bell, W. M. Thackeray. The result of this meeting was a 'Proposed Prospectus,' which was printed and sent round to the principal writers of the country, asking for suggestions, and for co-operation with the movement.

Considering the epigrams of the wits, the long-smouldering wrath of the authors, their grievances, real or fancied, against the publishers, the fiery words of Dickens about the great American wrong, and the prophetic utterances of Carlyle, the document called the 'Prospectus of the Society of British Authors' is, without doubt, the feeblest and the most futile that ever was put together by any body of oppressed and indignant mortals. They had nothing to advance by way of grievance, nothing to propose, to suggest, to offer. They had not even

enough backbone to set forth their wrongs. The prospectus announced, first of all, that the society would have four objects:

1. To register the names and works of all the authors in the British Empire.

2. To secure the observance of the laws for the protection of authors and their property.

3. To obtain such alterations of existing laws, and the enactment of such new laws, both national and international, as may from time to time be deemed necessary.

4. To establish correspondence with authors, both at home and abroad, in reference to the objects of the society, and the great interests of civilization involved in them.

The prospectus then went on to propose the delivery of 'occasional discourses on literary topics, by the most eminent members.' It promised a sub-committee which should inform the members on points of law; it held out a faint hope of backing up any injured brother; and it promised another sub-committee to consider the subject of libel and defamation, then under revision by a Committee of the House of Lords.

This was all. On the great question of equitable publishing not a word even to show that such a question could be raised: on the one point—the only point—which can unite members of any profession, their material interests, not a word of hope

or even of understanding. Why, then, did they expect that authors would join the society? Well, they held out certain sentimental considerations. Authors would rally round the flag; they would be able to learn of each other—as if any author could ever desire to learn of anyone else in the same line; as well suggest to a Q.C. that he should sit in Court in order to listen and hear law from another Q.C.; they would make acquaintance with each other—well, already the Clarence, the Alfred, the Garrick, and the Athenæum clubs were in existence; they would hear lectures from 'their more eminent brothers'—it would, indeed, be a delightful thing for any historian, novelist, poet, or painter to be informed of the eminence of a rival, and to be asked to sit meekly at his feet and hear him lecture. And the malignity of reviewing, this sanguine prospectus promised, would be mitigated by the newly-born acknowledgment of fraternity. Not the acknowledgment of fraternity, but the improvement of manners has succeeded in abolishing, or greatly mitigating, the malignant reviewer. Those authors who are critics no longer, as a rule, brandish a club: Mr. Bludyer sleeps with his kind; there are some who still, it is true, withhold appreciation, damn with faint praise, stab with a dagger no longer than a pin, and peck at reputations when they get an anonymous opportunity. But the critical club which used to be wielded with strength and skill surprising and malice

incredible, is almost gone. Slashing and slogging hardly exist outside the range of politics.

'Authors,' continued this amiable prospectus, 'want helpful sympathy. The more they can estimate the works of others, the more generous, efficient, and intelligent will be their recommendation of each other.'

Quite so. Specialists are well known to desire nothing so much as the success of brother specialists in the same line. Painters never tire of pointing out the merits of more popular painters. The Royal Academy has always been eager to recognise the superior work of outsiders; and the men who have failed are the loudest in their admiration of the men who have succeeded.

However, at the end of this precious document the Committee contrived to hit upon one practical idea—the only one in the whole document, and one of which they were totally unable to perceive the importance.

'A field of inquiry,' they say, 'vast, tangled, and important, lies before the Society. The present state of the literary trades—publishing, printing, bookbinding, paper-making, bookselling; the condition of the advertising system, of the circulating libraries, of the book clubs, of the publishing societies—these, and similar subjects, cannot fail to yield to inquiry a great tangible good not in existence at present, correct and complete information respecting their influence for good and ill on literature in its highest and humblest aspects.'

To acquire this information should have been their first object; if they had placed this end before themselves at the outset, the society might have lived and flourished and done good work.

They began, in fact, with an impossible theory: that authorship is a profession as distinct as law or medicine; and that it is possible to unite its members, as those called to the Bar are united, into a guild or company governed by its own laws. At the most, authorship is a collection of professions. The novelist practises one of the fine arts, though not one critic in a hundred recognises fiction as an art, or knows how to estimate a novel with reference to the laws of perspective, colour, atmosphere, grouping, drawing, which govern that art. The poet practises another art. The journalist follows a distinct branch of literature. The writer on science is a student in science first and an author next; the historian is a student in history first, and so on. It is impossible to make a guild of these men. How are outsiders to be kept off? How is the distribution of work to be regulated? How is professional etiquette to be established?

There is one thing, and one thing only, for which those who write books and papers which are sold can possibly unite—viz., their material interests. The authors of 1843 were like Dickens's American friends; they whispered to each other, 'Yes—yes—we are horribly treated—it is quite true, we all

know it; but for Heaven's sake don't say so in public; in epigram as much as you please; but in plain English—no.'

There were then, I repeat, just as there are now, two distinct grievances under which writers suffered —the American piracies and the absence of any equitable system of publishing.

A society which would cause the former to be swept away would earn the everlasting gratitude of English and American literature. It might then sit down and expire. A society which would put forth and cause the recognition of the latter would also crown itself with glory and earn the gratitude of all future generations; but it would have to live on in order to defend the new-born rights of literature.

The chair at the meeting of March 25 was taken, as has been stated, by Campbell; Carlyle was present. At the meeting of April 8 Charles Dickens presided. When the first prospectus appeared the names of all three were conspicuous by their absence. Why Campbell retired is not discoverable. Carlyle gives his reasons in two letters which have been preserved.

'CHELSEA, *April* 7, 1843.

'I ought have explained more distinctly what I did state in the way of conversation on Sunday week, that in my present great bustle of business and total dimness as to this matter in hand, I cannot attend your com-

mittee—that, in fact, I do not see what any committee or person can do in the present stage of the business except inquire, in a distinct manner, of the literary notabilities of the country whether they consider such a project to have any feasibility in it; whether they will take the trouble to meet or consult at all on the subject, or will not take any such trouble. If they all answer no, then clearly the project is unexecutable. If yes, if many, or even several of them answer yes, then is the time come for a meeting. As it at present stands, I really and truly cannot help you at all, and therefore beg to be off and excused.

'The prospectus which arrived this morning is unexceptionable in character, but seems to me to offer little practical basis for any operation beyond what I have above indicated. I have written a sentence at the bottom of the page which embraces my own opinion of the matter and nearly all the opinion I yet have of it.

'Yours ever truly,
'T. CARLYLE.'

And on May 1:

'I wish it to be distinctly understood that I cannot be a member of the Committee of the Authors' Society nor of the Society itself, nor, indeed, embark any labour at all upon it, under its present aspect.'

As for the reasons which made Charles Dickens retire, they will be found in a letter addressed to Babbage on April 27, 1843. The editor of his letters has not been able to discover what is meant by what Dickens calls the 'Cockspur Street Society.' It is much to be desired that Babbage's

notes, referred to in the letter, had been preserved.

'You may suppose, from seeing my name in the printed letter you have received, that I am favourable to the proposed Society. I am decidedly opposed to it. I went there on the day I was in the chair after much solicitation, and being put into it, opened the proceedings by telling the meeting that I approved of the design in theory, but in practice considered it hopeless. I may tell you—I did not tell them—that the nature of the meeting, and the character and position of many of the men attending it, cried "Failure" trumpet-tongued in my ears. To quote an expression from Tennyson, I may say that if it were the best society in the world, the grossness of some natures in it would have weight to drag it down.

'In the wisdom of all you urge in the notes you have sent me, taking them as statements of theory, I entirely concur. But in practice I feel sure that the present publishing system cannot be overset until authors are different men. . . . But having seen the Cockspur Street Society I am as well convinced of its invincible hopelessness as if I saw it written by a celestial penman in the Book of Fate.'

The Committee, in spite of these defections, looked well on paper. It consisted of the following:

John Auldjo.
Robert Bell.
Sir E. L. Bulwer.
Rev. H. F. Cary.
Lord Francis Egerton.
G. P. R. James.
J. Westland Marston.
Captain Marryat.
Augustus de Morgan.
John Robertson.
Horace Smith.
Sir Gardner Wilkinson.

The first and only list of members contains one hundred.* Among them, though there are a great

* As a contemporary list of writers, taking account of the exceptions mentioned, this document is valuable. The following are the names and descriptions appended :

Mrs. Abdy, author of Poems, etc.
Archibald Alison, author of 'History of Europe,' etc.
W. Anderson, author of 'Landscape Lyrics,' etc.
John Anster, LL.D., author of 'Faustus,' from the German of Goethe, etc.
John Auldjo, author of 'Ascent of Mount Blanc,' etc.
P. J. Bailey, author of 'Festus,' etc.
Alexander Bain, author of Essays, etc.
Francis Barham, author of 'Reuchlin,' etc.
M. H. Barker, author of 'The Old Sailor,' etc.
Bayle Bernard, author of Dramas, etc.
W. Beattie, M.D., author of 'Castles and Abbeys of England,' etc.
Captain G. Beauclerk, author of 'The Operation of Monopolies,' etc.
Gilbert à Beckett, author of Dramas, etc.
Robert Bell, author of 'History of Russia.'
Laman Blanchard, author of 'Life of L. E. L.,' etc.
Rev. E. A. Bray, author of Sermons, etc.
Mrs. Bray, author of 'Henry de Pomeroy,' etc.
Sir D. Brewster, author of 'The Natural History of Magic,' etc.
J. S. Buckingham, author of 'Travels in Palestine,' etc.
Sir E. L. Bulwer, Bart., author of 'The Last of the Barons,' etc.
John Barnett, author of 'Compositions: Light and Shade,' etc.
J. H. Burton, author of 'Introduction to Bentham,' etc.
Sir T. F. Buxton, author of Work on Slavery, etc.
Rev. H. F. Cary, translator of Dante, etc.
R. Carruthers author of 'The Highland Note-Book,' etc.

many well-known names, there are absences. The loss of the three leaders, Campbell, Carlyle, and

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Rev. R. Cattermole, author of 'The Book of the Cartoons,' etc.
J. Payne Collier, editor of the new edition of Shakespeare.
W. B. Costello, M.D., author of 'Cyclopædia of Practical Surgery.'
Rev. G. Croly, author of 'Life of Edmund Burke.'
Peter Cunningham, author of 'Westminster Abbey,' etc.
George Darley, author of 'Thomas à Becket, and other Poems,' etc.
Augustus de Morgan, author of 'Differential and Integral Calculus,' etc.
George Dennis, author of 'A Summer in Andalusia,' etc.
C. W. Dilke, editor of the *Athenæum*, etc.
Miss Edgeworth, author of 'Tales of Fashionable Life,' etc.
Lord Francis Egerton, author of 'Mediterranean Sketches,' etc.
Rev. Dr. Fletcher, author of 'Lectures on the Romish Controversy,' etc.
Robert Fletcher, author of Essays on Milton, Bacon, etc.
Rev. W. J. Fox, Editor of the *Monthly Repository*, etc.
George Godwin, author of 'The Churches of London,' etc.
Mrs. James Gray, author of 'Ignatia, and other Poems.'
Lady Charlotte Guest, author of 'Mabinogion,' etc.
S. C. Hall, editor of the *Art Union*, etc.
Mrs. S. C. Hall, author of 'Marian,' etc.
J. O. Halliwell, author of 'Shaksperiana,' etc.
Rev. John Harris, author of 'Mammon,' etc.
W. Hazlitt, editor of 'Montaigne,' etc.
J. A. Heraud, author of 'Savonarola,' etc.
W. E. Hickson, editor of the *Westminster Review*, etc.
W. M. Higgins, author of 'The Mineral and Mosaical Geology,' etc.
Rowland Hill, author of 'Postage Reform,' etc.
Mrs. Hofland, author of 'The Son of a Genius,' etc.
Thomas Hood, editor of the *New Monthly Magazine*, etc.
Charles Hooton, author of 'Colin Clink,' etc.
R. H. Horne, author of 'Cosmo de Medici,' etc.

Dickens, was a grievous blow. Wordsworth, Moore, Tennyson, Browning, Lockhart, Croker, Jesse,

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J. Hughes, author of Poems, etc.
Leigh Hunt, author of Poetical Works, etc.
G. P. R. James, author of 'Darnley,' etc.
Mrs. Jameson, author of 'The Characteristics of Woman,' etc.
Douglas Jerrold, editor of the *Illuminated Magazine*, etc.
J. Sheridan Knowles, author of 'The Secretary, a Drama,' etc.
Samuel Laing, author of 'Travels in Norway,' etc.
Samuel Lover, author of 'Rory O'More,' etc.
David Lowe, author of 'Lectures on Agriculture,' etc.
Mrs. Col. Maberley, author of 'Emily,' etc.
Evan MacColl, author of 'The Mountain Minstrel,' etc.
Charles Mackay, author of 'The Salamandrine,' etc.
R. Shelton Mackenzie, author of 'Titian,' etc.
Rev. F. S. Mahony, author of 'Reliques of Father Prout,' etc.
J. Westland Marston, author of 'The Patrician's Daughter,' etc.
Captain Marryat, author of 'Peter Simple,' etc.
Miss Martineau, author of 'The Playfellow,' etc.
David Masson, editor of the *Aberdeen Banner*, etc.
Rev. Edward Miall, author of 'The Nonconformist's Sketch-Book,' etc.
Miss Mitford, author of 'Our Village,' etc.
Miss Julia Pardoe, author of 'The Hungarian Castle,' etc.
Miss Harriett Pigott, author of 'Records of Real Life,' etc.
John Poole, author of 'Paul Pry,' etc.
G. R. Porter, author of 'The Progress of the Nation,' etc.
J. E. Reade, author of 'Italy,' etc.
A. J. Ritchie, author of 'The Columbiad.'
John Robertson, author of 'Oliver Cromwell,' etc.
Heaton Robinson, author of 'Memoirs of Sir Thomas Picton,' etc.
B. Simmons, author of Legends, Lyrics, etc.
Horace Smith, author of 'Brambletye House,' etc.
Southwood Smith, author of 'The Philosophy of Health.'
Henry Spicer, author of 'Lords of Ellingham,' etc.

Milman, Rogers, Hallam, Palgrave, are all wanting. Still, these absences mattered little. If such a society had been administered by practical men it would have mattered nothing at all had every single man of note withheld his name.

The list is interesting, not only as a list of *littérateurs*, but considered with reference to the immortality of fame. Here they are—the great men of fifty years ago. Where are all these children of genius now? Well, some—more than one would expect—still survive. Out of the hundred there is a goodly remnant who are still read. Alison, 'Festus' Bailey, Lord Lytton, Miss Edgeworth, George Dennis of Etruscan fame, Tom Hood, Leigh Hunt, Mrs. Jameson, Douglas Jerrold, Father Prout, Marryat, Miss Martineau, Miss Mitford, Thackeray—still flourish. It cannot

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T. Stone, M.D., author of 'Evidence on Phrenology,' etc.
Chas. Swain, author of 'The Mind, and other Poems,' etc.
Rev. J. Taylor, author of Sermons, etc.
W. M. Thackeray, author of 'The Irish Sketch-Book,' etc.
Miss Camilla Toulmin, author of Poems, etc.
Rev. D. Thorn, author of 'Divine Inversion,' etc.
R. Z. S. Troughton, author of 'Nina Sforza,' etc.
Sir J. Gardner Wilkinson, author of 'The Ancient Egyptians,' etc.
Mrs. Cornwall Wilson, editor of the *New Monthly Belle Assemblée*, etc.
G. Wingfield, author of 'Solitude, and other Poems,' etc.
Rev. W. Wright, author of 'Slavery at the Cape,' etc.
Thomas Wyse, author of 'History of the Catholic Association,' etc.

be said that a better list could be got together in the present day, apart from the really great names which it contains. As for the rest, they point the useful moral that literary immortality is mostly limited; that those who write books generally work for their own generation alone, and should be contented with the knowledge that they can please and advance their own world. This, indeed, is a very great thing, and worthy of ambition; it is far better, for instance, that a woman should be like unto Mrs. Bray or Miss Julia Pardoe—both of whom adorn this list—and write novels for her contemporaries, and should be forgotten almost before she dies, than to have no influence beyond the narrow circle of her parish, her family, and her friends. Thrice blessed is he who is able to delight or to advance those among whom he lives.

It is characteristic of the opinion formed at the outset concerning the Society that the *Athenæum* and the *Literary Gazette* never accord to it a single paragraph. Yet the editor of the *Athenæum* was one of the members. That paper, it is true, records, at this time, the establishment of a 'Court'—what kind of Court was it, how long did it last, and what work did it accomplish?—at Stuttgart for the decision of quarrels between authors and publishers, and that of another formed at Leipzig in imitation of the former. The journal further strongly advocates an alliance between authors and publishers for

the protection of—whom?—the latter! And it exhausts itself in indignation over a great American piracy which has inflicted a blow—not upon an author, but upon a publishing house. In a word, literary property, in the eyes of the literary papers of this date—and, no doubt, in the eyes of the world—belonged as a right, exclusively and naturally, to publishers. Authors—the producers of literary property—were still considered as publishers' hacks.

The Committee of the new Society, in issuing the prospectus, invited suggestions. Many letters were sent in reply, which have been preserved. I have made a few selections from the most interesting of these. By far the most important, the most clear-sighted, and the most far-seeing of them is a letter from Harriet Martineau.

'TYNEMOUTH, *April* 25, 1843.

'DEAR SIR,

'I have considered with deep interest your letter respecting the proposed Society of Authors. I have no difficulty in replying to your two prominent questions.

'I do think a society of authors desirable, and I do see it to be my duty to assist if possible in establishing it.

'I wish I could see half as clearly any probability of my being useful in the enterprise. As you know, I have neither health nor wealth, but I have leisure, and every inclination to accept suggestions from those who will prompt me to any service.

'The field of beneficent operation of the proposed Society seems to me almost boundless. The objects

indicated in your prospectus—so various and so important—make one wonder how one can have gone on so long suffering under evils which union might ere this have obviated, and deprived of advantages which union might long ago have secured.

'The hardship that I am most sensible of in our disunited condition is the impossibility of making our books cheap; the exclusion which we suffer from the classes of readers that most of us chiefly desire to reach. If we had copyright laws to our heart's content, this evil would remain, as it must be needless for me to explain. If the proposed researches into "the present state of the literary trades" should issue in such an understanding between "The Trade," authors, and readers as would bring all the parties into a natural relation, as great a service will be rendered to a future generation as is, perhaps, in the power of the present. Millions of children are now growing up within the limits of our Empire, who have at present no other prospect than a dearth of books—or at least of empirical reading; of reading from which we who want to reach these classes are excluded, because our books cost half a guinea a volume, when we would fain offer them at half a crown. I myself have been trying for years to discover some means of making my books cheap, even by the foregoing of all profit; but in vain. And I see some of them only now beginning to reach large numbers for whom they were written several years ago, while they have hitherto been in the hands of a much smaller class, to whom my appeal was not made. This being the case with most or all of us, how enormous is the grievance!

'Perfect copyright laws would aid us to a certain extent; but what we want more in relation to the price of our book is mutual assistance to extricate us from the

transition state between old patronage and that free communication between speaker and hearers—writers and readers—which must be arrived at sooner or later.

'The proposed Society would be a universal blessing if it accomplished no other object than establishing this free communication.

'May we not anticipate great good from the new influences which will operate upon criticism? Will not a strong check be imposed upon malignant reviewing? It is true, I am persuaded, that our body is "not inferior to any class in generosity to each other." Malignant reviewing commonly proceeds, not from personal enmity, but from party policy or party spirit, and if a better party spirit can be brought in to exclude or modify the lower, there may be a great abatement of the virulence which assumes the mask of criticism.

'Though malignant reviewing bears an extremely small proportion in bulk to that which is generous or harmless, it is an enormous evil—mischievous out of all proportion to its bulk—by narrowing the auditory of writers, and thus inflicting privation on society as well as injury on individuals. When authors are no longer isolated, and on each separate occasion defenceless, but are under the moral shelter of a fraternity, it appears that they must be comparatively safe from mere insult, whether the foe be included in the fraternity, or compelled to respect it from without.

'I suppose no kind of literary production by the Society as a body is contemplated. Many and great difficulties might rise up before any proposal of the kind; but while speaking of criticism it does occur to me that our Society would include means of remedy for the other great evil—of inadequate and inappropriate reviewing. As far as my acquaintance with authors goes, I find all suffering under the same grievance—all

complaining that while meeting with abundant goodwill, courtesy, and even flattery, it is the rarest thing in the world to meet with appreciation. So it must be while criticism is conducted by small corps of men (however accomplished and kindly individually), each corps undertaking the whole field of literature. It must happen under such an arrangement, not only often, but usually, that the best works on all subjects are reviewed by persons who know less of their subjects than their authors. The absurdity of the more knowing writer being brought under the judgment of the less knowing is thus a daily spectacle, a practical insult to the author, either painful or demoralizing to the reviewer, or misleading to the public.

'The Society including all who are best qualified to review what is done in all departments of authorship, all probably who now exercise criticism, is it not probable that a better arrangement may take place? That instead of several small corps, who each review everything, there may be a better adaptation of tribunals to that which has to be judged? From this may we not hope that an improved criticism will induce an improved temper among its subjects? If the conduct of criticism should ever become a department of the operations of the Association, I believe our influence upon Society would be deepened and strengthened, as it could be by no other employment of our united resources.

'The prospectus states that, "through the Society authors wishing for literary employment may hear of it." This suggests another use of our powers. There are entire classes of foreign works needed at home, which cannot be supplied by individual effort, but might by the resources of a society. As one instance, the Germans far excel us in the creation of children's

books. No one who knows both can for a moment compare English juvenile literature with the German. Any English person acquainted with some juvenile works of the Germans may or may not be able to make a good selection from them, and to translate a few, but it is a rare chance if he can get more than one published, and it is certain he will have a world of difficulty in placing the books under the eyes of a sufficient number of the right sort of readers.

'The Society, with its foreign correspondence, its command of a good selection, its command of translators, its power with the trade, and its influence with the public, may easily import a new and valuable literature, which might otherwise remain unawakened for generations to come.

'I give this as the first instance that occurs of this advantageous direction of our powers. If I have written only what is obvious to everybody already, you have only to throw aside my letter. If, as I said, you can make me useful, you will be doing me a kindness by pointing out the way. You will have in me a disinterested member at least, for, as you know, my authorship is closed. I am just equal to writing a letter.

'Perhaps, when the subcommittee under your sixth head is formed, my acquaintance with the chief American authors and law-makers may make me a useful instrument in the business of obtaining an international copyright arrangement with the United States. I can furnish information as to what was done on the subject in 1837 in Congress, and in the newspapers, and have some communications from Mr. Clay as to the proceedings in the Senate at that time.

'Believe me, with hearty goodwill to your enterprise;

'Very truly yours,

'HARRIET MARTINEAU.'

Harriet Martineau is ready to give personal help —almost the only one who does offer personal service. She sees clearly that union may accomplish many things; she is not carried away by sentimental platitudes; she wants to reform altogether the whole system of publishing; she wants cheap books; she wants to write for the people and to be read by the people; she wants to check the malignity of reviewers.

What would she want if she wrote in the year '89? Cheap books there are in plenty. But it has now been found that the mass of the people will not buy books in order to improve themselves. They read, but they read the papers only; therefore, she would want the character and standards of the daily press to be jealously watched; she would want the people to be led honestly and truthfully, with no regard to party; and as regards the material side of literature, she would join her voice to the voices of those who demand fair treatment and equity, and nothing more.

Let us take the letters of the lesser worthies. Barbara Hofland — who remembereth Barbara? Yet she wrote 'The Son of a Genius,' and was important enough to have a biography written of her when she died, a year or two later—writes a pretty, touching letter. "She is an old woman, and she is poor—and she has been robbed. Perhaps the Society will make it impossible for designing persons

to rob an author or steal a book. Lady Charlotte Guest—who is not forgotten, for a new edition of 'Mabinogion' appeared only the other day—wishes well to the Society. There is, indeed, a general consensus of good wishes. Everybody says, 'Go on and work; we wish you well.' Lord Francis Egerton—a most respectable historian and traveller and *Quarterly* Reviewer—joins the Committee and wishes well, but refuses to do any work. That most amiable lady, Mrs. Bray, rejoices at the foundation of the Society, and not only joins herself, but brings along her illustrious husband, who has written sermons. The Rev. T. Binney is attracted by the promise of the lectures, and promises to attend if they will only get Wordsworth, or some equally great man, to discourse.

Of the suggestions offered, only a few are practical. Mr. George Darley, who wrote 'Thomas à Becket, and other Poems,' writes a letter full of questions, which need not be reproduced, because most of them have long since answered themselves. Mr. Robert Bell, who was a collector of Early English ballads, a small traveller, and the author of a 'Life of George Canning' and a 'History of Russia,' drafted a constitution for the Society, a more workmanlike production than the prospectus. Talfourd, the dramatist, writes a practical letter, dated January, 1842, which shows that some such association had been for some time under considera-

tion. 'I am happy,' he says, 'to find that literary men of your position and endowments are still desirous of obtaining something like justice for the works of industry and genius.' He evidently contemplates something in the nature of co-operative publishing, and points out that there are many dangers in the way, the first being that the management may fall into the hands of a clique. 'I have declined two or three schemes'—one would like further information as to these schemes—'not so comprehensive as yours seems to be, for publishing works which booksellers decline, or without their aid.' Horace Smith, of 'Rejected Addresses' fame, and the author of eight or nine novels and half a dozen other works besides, hails the new Society.

'I have long thought it,' he says, 'a disgrace to authors, and a miserable blindness to their interests, that they should never have formed any association for their mutual protection. . . . I remember a similar attempt being made many years ago, principally at the instigation of Mr. Cumberland,* which failed from a want of accordance among its members as to the best mode of conducting it, and the difficulty that was found of effecting sales without the intervention of the booksellers, which, if I mistake not, was a part of the plan. I believe there is no trade whatever in such an anomalous state as the publishing trade, and none which requires a more searching reform.'

* Cumberland's 'Memoirs' contain no information on this subject.

Dr. Lingard, the historian, writes a kindly letter to his friend, Shelton Mackenzie. 'Your aptitude to forge signatures I recollect, and if you forge mine to the roll of members I cannot help it. . . . There can be no doubt that it is a laudable and useful undertaking.'

Sir Archibald Alison writes from Glasgow, and gives his name with the best wishes.

There is a highly characteristic letter from Mr. George Henry Lewes. He says:

'I thought I had been sufficiently explicit to you on Thursday in assuring you of my good wishes and willingness to belong to the Society when organized, but also of my incapacity and unwillingness to assist in the organization. I am not a practical man; my business is to think and not to act. No one is more earnest in desiring to elevate the profession of literature to its true position. But my hopes of a reform are from *within*, and not from *without*. Opinion must first be influenced, and then the organization of a profession will evolve itself from that opinion. Be this, however, as it may, I must, on quite other grounds, beg you to excuse my active co-operation in the formation of the Society you propose. I should be useless to you, and should lose time, very *precious* to one who has great ambition and limited faculties, and who is obliged to cultivate a little of the systematic egotism inevitable, though unamiable, which alone can enable him to carry out his plans. Let this be my excuse, and let it be received under the cloak of tolerance, which intellect alone has power and honesty enough to spread over all differences.'

His intellect, you see, was too lofty to stoop to things practical. Later on, it is true, when that intellect got the management of George Eliot's novels, it proved extremely practical. But just then it soared above things mundane. Yet, let us consider. Suppose that George Henry Lewes had given such practical assistance to the Society as would have helped it to place, once for all, the publishing of books on an equitable footing, just and fair to both author and publisher, could we not have spared some of those works—the fruits of his gigantic intellect—which are already indicating the limits of their immortality? It is pleasing, however, to get this brief glimpse into a soul which knows how really great and precious and superior it is.

Mr. C. W. Dilke, whose name is on the list of members, brings along a large jug of cold water, the exhibition of which explains the silence of the *Athenæum*:

'It would be idle,' he says, 'to occupy your time with minor objections or suggestions. I see no end to be attained by association. It appeared to me at the meeting that the most sanguine had no clearer idea on the subject. The circular is a mere deferring and evading of the real question. Assume that everybody assents to the abstract proposition, you cannot take another step without meeting difficulties which seem insurmountable.'

We then come to letters which show that trouble has begun. There is one from Shelton

Mackenzie, who once wrote an 'Art novel' called 'Titian':

'I am sure you will not be frightened by the lukewarm support of some, and the more manly, because the more open, discouragement of others. Go on. To you, who measure a thing by its usefulness to the many, to whom, in Bulwer's fine line, the children of a future day may inscribe the words: "Peace to him and his—he hath served mankind" . . . depend on it, you are achieving a great thing. You are combining the elements which, really and truly, may and must make the Press the Fourth Estate of the Realm.'

And there is another from Mr. John Britton, a writer still remembered by those who care for topography, county histories, and architectural archæology. John Britton, who began life as a baker's boy, was then seventy-five years of age, with ten more years of his vigorous and active life before him. Had he been twenty years younger the result of this movement might have been different:

'Your last note,' he writes, 'gives me pain, for I thought we had made a firm stand, and were going on well and cordially. If you desert your infant in its present state of helplessness it will pine, die, or be sent to the poor house. If the original founders be dispossessed of their posts in the present stage of the edifice, I feel persuaded that it will never be completed. A few moments' confidential chat will enable me to explain my meaning. One of the persons you name would be a bad substitute for either of the appointed Committee, and I *know* would be more likely to ruin

than promote the cause you have at heart. In naming you, Mackay, and Bell, I was prompted by a desire to preserve the integrity of the structure which had been auspiciously commenced. Do not suffer any little misunderstanding to mar the project, nor allow the envious and illiberal to beguile your better judgment.'

Finally, there is a sorrowful letter from Mrs. S. C. Hall, which tells a tale of bitterness and disappointment. All was over. The Society was dead. It died before it accomplished anything. None of the authors wanted to learn of each other; nobody rallied round the holy flag of literature; even the sacredness of their work could not bring them together; and even the prospect of lectures from men more eminent than themselves failed to move them. Nobody would do any work; the Society died, and the secretary and concocter of a prospectus so amiable was broken-hearted.

'I am sure you will believe me,' says the kind lady, who tries to console the secretary in the dark hour of bereavement, 'when I tell you that Mr. Hall and myself regret most truly that any opinion we should have expressed could give you pain. I knew that Mr. Dickens did not think your plan as certain as you did yourself, and persons may change their opinion without doing a wrong thing. Your confidence of success in the first instance prevented, perhaps, persons from saying all they thought and all they feared. Of *your* integrity of purpose there

could be no doubt; and if Mr. Buckingham effects a good'—a good what? this is obscure—'and provides for himself at the same time, he is—a careful man—and that is all.

'Mr. Hall has been tempted to join them'—whom?—'more than once, but he has not done so. I am sure he is ready now as ever to stand by you, though he fears, as he did at first, that your troops will not "march."

'You have done all you could and sacrificed more time and attention than your brother and sister authors could have expected, and I am sure you did all for pure love of, and glory in, "the cause." I am sure you will come and see us when you can, and I am also certain that we shall ever be glad to see you.'

It is instructive to note, partly because it shows how ignorant of things Continental was England in 1843, that all this time another Society called the Société des Gens de Lettres, whose history has been recently written,* was pursuing its way to a triumphal success. Slowly and painfully, it is true, and with many moments of doubt as to the issue, but yet surely. Between the English and the French Societies there was indeed the vast difference which lies between him who knows what he wants and

* 'The Société des Gens de Lettres,' by S. S. Sprigge. (Published for the Society of Authors, by H. Glaisher, 1889.)

declares his intention of getting it, and him who either does not know what he wants or is afraid to open his mind. The French Society had a practical aim ; it moved step by step always in one direction. The sole object of its existence was to secure for the producers of literature their own property for themselves, not for those who sell it. Years afterwards, when this Society had actually succeeded beyond the expectations of its earliest friends, Charles Dickens was writing letters to show that any form of the royalty system, which is the real and only possible basis of any equitable arrangement, would be always impossible in this country, because the author cannot wait for his money. Even now there are many who hold the same Grub Street view concerning men of letters. But at this early period, when the Société des Gens de Lettres had been established only a few years, it is quite wonderful to compare the simple directness and the acuteness of the French with the blundering hypocrisies and sentimental conventionalism of the English.

In every new society it is one man, and one man alone, who at the outset determines the success and the future of the association. It is one man who rules, infuses spirit, collects ideas, orders the line of march, lays down the policy, and thinks for the society. This is perfectly well known and understood by all who have ever worked upon committees or associated themselves with any combined effort.

Therefore we must reluctantly acknowledge that the failure of this Society was due to the incompetence of the man who first started it and became its honorary secretary. Apathy on the part of those concerned, jealousy, even where personal interests are at stake, interference, hostility and misunderstanding—these are difficulties which every such association should expect. That so many good men withheld their names at first ought not to have mattered at all, so long as the projector and manager had a clear and definite programme to advocate. This the French Society had, and held it steadily in sight and ultimately succeeded. This Mr. Robertson had not. Therefore, he failed.

Comparison with the present is useful and instructive. After fifty years of existence the French Society, having done most of its work, is quietly lapsing into the languor which betokens age: a new English Society has undertaken the task abandoned by the last generation, and is vigorously pursuing its aims with a now definite policy. But the object sought to attain is enormously, incredibly increased in value. Literary property in 1843 was a feeble bantling compared with that of 1889. It is difficult to overstate the proportions which this kind of property has now assumed. Not only the increase of population, the creation of great nations in lands which fifty years ago were jungle and scrub, but also

the spread of education and the vast development of the taste for reading, have caused this increase. It is not too much to say that if it were not for the incredible persistence in wrong-doing of the American Government—not, we must always gratefully acknowledge, of the better class among the American people—the career and the position of a successful man of letters, supposing him to be a prudent person, might, from the mere material point of view, become the most enviable of any conceivable. No merchant adventurer, no manufacturer, no silver mine proprietor, would be richer than that American or Englishman who should succeed, as Charles Dickens succeeded, in grasping the prize of universal popularity. When once international copyright and an equitable plan of publishing have been achieved, wealth beyond the dreams of the biggest brewers' vat will be his, honour greater than any Sovereign can bestow will be paid to him.

Is this great, this enormous property, to belong to those who make it, or to those who sell it? This was the real question in 1843; this is the real question in 1889. Now, as then, the methods of publishing are wholly chaotic. The old system of half-profits lingers only here and there, utterly discredited. The old plan of buying manuscripts is practised by three or four houses only. There is still no recognised principle: no system is acknowledged as just and fair on which royalties should be

given ; and as to the cost of production—the actual expense of printing, paper, binding, and so forth—the ignorance of authors is still as great as ever, and this ignorance enables dishonest persons to accomplish, hitherto with impunity, their most common frauds.

It is the settled policy of the present Society of Authors to spread abroad and to cultivate the knowledge of the reality of literary property, and consequently to awaken a healthy jealousy, so that a man shall no more part with a book—even with full appreciation of the fact that most books fail—than he will part with a house or sell a field without the protection of the lawyer. The more jealous and suspicious authors become, with regard to their manuscripts, the better it will be to their own interests. Next, it is the Society's aim to throw a flood of light upon all those matters connected with the literary trade which have been hitherto kept mysteriously dark and secret, such as the exact cost of production, the actual profits made by the sale of an edition, the real nature and extent of the 'risk' of which we hear so much, so that an author may be enabled clearly to understand, before he signs any agreement, what it is that he gives to the publisher for his work in distributing and collecting, and what it is that he reserves for himself.

In other words, we intend that the buying and selling of manuscripts, the management of books,

shall be as open and well understood a business as any other, and conducted, *on both sides*, with the same care and caution. With this end in view, it is the every-day work of the Society to keep before the eyes of authors the absolute necessity of signing nothing without advice, and, also as a part of this policy, it is the Society's daily work to advise upon agreements. But the chief end and aim of the modern Association is exactly that of the French Society, to found and establish, once for all, an equitable system of publishing, by which the author shall not concede, nor the publisher require, more than is just and fair. In brief, the new Society demands what the French asked for fifty years ago, and the English of the Forties were afraid to ask—simple honesty and justice, fairness of dealing in this as in any other kind of business.

When will literary men be at last fully convinced that there is such a thing as a just and fair division of the profits arising from their labours, and that literary property is no imaginary castle in the air, but a great, a rich, and a most valuable estate, daily growing enormously richer and more valuable?

[1889.]

LITERATURE AS A CAREER*

IN the remarks which follow it must be understood that I speak of things as they obtain in my country. And perhaps a few words of explanation may be accepted as regards the comparison which I have to make between literature as a profession and the other recognised professions. The distinguishing points about the recognised professions —including the Church, the law, medicine, the services, education, and certain branches of science —are these:

1. The pay is regulated. In the services, in education, and in science it is by way of salary, and that not high; in law and medicine, by way of fixed fee and regulated scale of charges—those not high. So that though there are very great prizes in these professions, they are few in number. Those who enter the professions do so, for the most part, with a full knowledge that they are not to become rich,

* This chapter originally appeared in the New York *Forum*. Since its publication an International Copyright Act has been passed between this country and the United States.

2. The regulation of the pay means that there is no fighting for money, no ignoble cutting down and underselling. This is an enormous advantage. The professions are independent.

3. All professions are fenced about with a high wall. No one can enter without passing a severe series of examinations, the preparation for which costs a large sum of money, and keeps the candidate at study till the age of twenty-one or twenty-two.

4. The prizes of professions—the honours—those of Bishop, Judge, Lord Chancellor, General, Admiral, a Peerage—fall, as a rule, to the best men.

5. All the professions have their central body, which protects the interests of the craft, admits candidates on examination, excludes unworthy members, and prohibits them from practising.

Now, with these facts before us for comparison, let us take the profession of letters. In the first place, anyone who chooses may enter this profession. It is impossible to keep anyone out. If the strictest examinations were devised in order to hedge it round, some young fellow in some country paper would write in disregard of them, and would take the world by storm. It is anybody's profession—no college, institute, or academy can close its doors—all the world can come in. Again, in any other profession there is a common standard of good work. In literature there is a kind—without doubt the highest kind—which pleases the refinement of five

hundred or five thousand who possess the highest culture possible. That is a very rare kind. There are not a dozen living writers of our language who quite satisfy the standard of this small class. But there are lower standards—those which appeal to the better class, the class whose literary taste is not so keen, or subtle, as that of the first class, yet is sound and wholesome. And there are lower standards and lower still, till we reach the depths of the penny novelette, the journal which is a scrap-book, the halfpenny sheet of ballads. Yet it is all literature, the literature of the nation, the literature of the people, from highest to lowest. At no point on this ladder of printed sheets can one stop and say, 'Here literature ends.'

The ever-open door of literature is sometimes considered an encouragement. In a sense it is. No one can be kept out. That seems a great thing. Every man who thinks he has a voice and a thing to say may say it if he pleases. Many think so daily, and essay to speak, yet never get a hearing. In another sense it is a discouragement, because this very freedom makes it so much more difficult to consider literature as a profession. Formerly there was a school of prophets; the greatest attention was paid at that school to style, to the right balance of the verses, and to the rules of composition. Yet there was no safety for the school; every now and then a man came out of Gilead clothed in a sheep-

skin, and, without any attention at all to style and rules, led all the people after him. And so it has been ever since. Yet one would not break up that school. It did good work. Such a school might still do good work. The most important function of the French Academy has not been to make its dictionary, but to maintain literature on the same level as other liberal professions; to rank its followers with those who follow scholarship; to make its leaders *officially* the equals of judges, or leading physicians. When we succeed in getting such an institution in Great Britain we shall take the first step toward securing for literature a general recognition of its position as a profession. Other advantages may perhaps follow; this seems to me the first and the most important.

Meantime, anybody who can may enter the profession. Its followers are scattered units; there is no cohesion, no combination among them for their material interests: every man manages his own affairs for himself as best he can. That is to say, he cannot manage them at all, because the elements, the principles of his business, have been carefully concealed from him. He is helpless. Even in the rare cases of assured success he is absolutely helpless. The literary papers encourage this helplessness; they enlarge upon the generosity of publishers, ignoring the fact that this so-called 'generosity' reduces the poet to the condition of a mendicant

dependent on the doles of his master! A London publisher died the other day, and the papers have since been full of his 'generosity' and his 'liberality.' Is it not wonderful that in a community of business men this sort of talk should still be continued? In what other line of intellectual work would a man submit without indignation to be considered a workman without rights, a mendicant, a helpless dependent, the mere recipient of bounty and charity? Can one figure the physician standing hat in hand before his patient—'Oh, sir, this is too much! You are indeed generous! Heaven itself will bless—— Another shilling? The starting tear betrays the grateful heart.' Or a barrister? Or a solicitor? Or a clergyman? It is ridiculous. Yet this is supposed to be the attitude of the man of letters, and any attempt on his part to get his affairs put upon a proper business basis is resented by the agent as if it were the greatest insult possible, and as if the property belonged to the agent—indeed, he generally makes it his own—instead of to its creator.

All the other professions have their central college or their institute, which is maintained and endowed for the sole purpose of maintaining the interests of its own profession. What has the calling of letters? The 'Royal Society of Literature' is a small decaying association which meets occasionally for the reading of papers. I suppose its own members would not claim for it that it does anything or tries

to do anything at all for literature. The 'Royal Literary Fund' relieves writers who are in difficulties; it is, indeed, doing invaluable work, but only in this direction. There is the 'Society of Authors': until the last year or two it was a very small society, though with ambitious aims; it is now growing powerful, and its aims are grown more ambitious. There are even hopes that this society will ultimately do for literature what the Inns of Court do for law and the Medical Corporations do for the medical profession; that is to say, that it will be powerful enough to regulate by fixed principles the management of literary property; that it will be disgraceful for a man of letters not to be a member of the society; that by its influence literature in every branch will take its place as a recognised and honourable profession.

The greatest discouragement to literature at the present moment—the cardinal discouragement—is the want of fixed principles as regards the management. This it is which makes every man who writes a book dread above all things making his own business arrangements. He does not know what the agreement should be; he hates to seem exorbitant and grasping; his very soul loathes the attitude of a mendicant. The other man, thoroughly experienced in these emotions, watches him, waits for his chance, speaks smooth things, hopes success, hints at great risks and dangers, suggests his own magnanimity in

undertaking these risks, and at the right moment, the critical moment, proposes an arrangement by which he will get nine-tenths of the proceeds. The author signs, half-ashamed of himself, half-conscious of trickery, but above all things anxious to have his book published. When the accounts come in he is mad, but then it is too late. This little comedy is enacted with nearly every book that is published. The publisher considers nothing but the getting of the property into his own hands, on his own terms; the author, helpless and ignorant, yet suspicious and resentful, yields up his property as meekly as a cow yields up her milk. No worker in the world, not even the needlewoman, is more helpless, more ignorant, more cruelly sweated, than the author. Therefore in a country, like Great Britain, of trade and business—that is, of enterprise, struggle, and battle; in a country, like ours, where honour of all kinds is rightly bestowed upon the victorious, contempt is the lot of the author. Contempt must indeed be the lot of those who are never victorious, whose spoils are always taken from them, who cannot combine, cannot fight, cannot defend their own property.

So far, it must be owned, we have not yet discovered many encouragements to the literary life. Let us continue to dwell a little longer upon the discouragements. This contempt of letters is often vehemently denied. Yet, in Great Britain, it exists

deep down in the national heart—not contempt for the work, understand; if that were so, then, indeed, of all mankind we should be the most miserable. The contempt is for the men who produce that work. Consider, there grows up gradually, in the course of generations, for every profession, a spectre, a phantom, an image, with outlines more or less dim, yet in its general details plain to see and to understand. To the judge, the barrister, the solicitor, the physician, the general practitioner, to every kind of trade, belongs its own phantom. The newer lines of work—those of journalist, engineer, electrician, physicist—have not yet developed their spectres: they will gradually arise and take shape. What is the spectre of the literary man? It is that of a creature wholly incapable of conducting business of any kind; one whose opinion on any subject is not worth anything; that of one not practical; who cannot be trusted; who is a fool as to his own affairs; who allows himself to be plundered and robbed, a creature in every relation of life foolish and contemptible, who yet produces things which the world loves to receive and to read. This man —which the world does not consider—this man so unpractical and so foolish, actually guides, leads, teaches, inspires, delights, admonishes the world; this man, whose opinion cannot be trusted, teaches the world what opinions it should hold. Yet it is all true: he is contemptible because he cannot

manage his own affairs, and he cannot do this because that management has been carefully concealed from him hitherto by his own agent.

This contempt, I repeat, is denied as often as it is asserted. That is because the contempt for the workman is one thing and admiration for his work is another. Yet if any doubt the contempt, let them consider the language and ideas of leading articles on the subject; I say leading articles, because there is nothing that more vividly and more truly expresses the opinion of the day. They do not, it is true, call the writing tribe contemptible in so many words, but they do always speak of them as naturally dependent, not on their work, but on their publishers. For instance, there are few men in England of broader mind than the editor of the *Spectator*. Yet even he, in a note written a few weeks ago, spoke of the publisher as formerly the patron of literature —which he never has been—and of that 'old position' as 'fine and gracious.' That is to say, it is fine and gracious for the author to be a dependent and a mendicant! Now, this has always been, outside the literary life, the prevailing estimate.

Again, there happened five years ago a thing which Americans will hardly believe—I have mentioned it already, but I repeat it because it ought not to be forgotten: At the greatest national function which has ever been celebrated in England, when we rejoiced solemnly and thanked God for a reign

of fifty years of unexampled progress—at this function, to which were invited representatives of every profession and almost every calling, *there was not invited one single man or woman of letters, as such.* Why? Because the official mind in every country, which always represents, measures, and illustrates the Philistinism of a country, has not yet risen to the consideration of literature as a profession, or of historians, essayists, poets, novelists, as persons worth regarding. To red tape and Bumble they do not exist. In America such an omission would be impossible. Why, if it was made, the whole of the States, from Massachusetts to the newest territory, would raise one consenting voice of reprobation; in France it would be impossible; in Germany, the mere possibility of such an insult to letters could not be so much as suggested. In no country could it be done except in Great Britain. And here it was done. And here no one perceived the omission. Here, so far as I know, not a single paper took up the thing. The contempt for letters could not be more signally shown, more clearly proved.

Well—but here is another and a more recent case. The other day a bust of Richard Jefferies, the latest of that little company of whom Gilbert White and Thoreau are leaders, was unveiled in Salisbury Cathedral, the mother church of his diocese. A little ecclesiastic ceremony was arranged; prayers were read; an address was delivered by the Bishop

and another by the Dean. Now, this monument was given to the Cathedral by a small number of Jefferies's admirers; there was a London committee to get together the money required. The committee and the greater number of the subscribers were literary men, some of them men of great eminence. It will hardly be believed that not a single man of letters was present on the occasion. Even the committee were not invited; *not a single man of letters was invited.* Yet the Bishop and the Dean are scholars and gentlemen. Why did they not invite the living *confrères* of Jefferies to assist in rendering this honour to their dead friend? Because these *confrères* were literary men. Because it never occurred to the functionaries of the Cathedral that there was such a thing as a calling of literature. 'O land of Philistia!' cries the American reader. Truly. Yet to change the name of Britannia to that of Philistia will not by itself mend matters.

Here, again, is another proof of official and national contempt for letters and calling. Let us once more remember that we must not confuse this contempt with contempt for the work produced, which does not exist, even in Great Britain. Rightly or wrongly, wisely or foolishly, we have in this country the institution of rank. There is hereditary rank from duke to baronet; there are also various orders of knighthood—the Garter, the Bath, the Thistle, St. Michael and St. George, the Star of India, the

Knight Bachelor. These distinctions are supposed to be awarded for services to the State. They are, as a matter of fact, awarded in the most capricious and happy-go-lucky way possible. One man of science—only one—gets made a peer; another, equally great, is offered the lowest order of knighthood, which he contemptuously refuses. A man makes vast sums in a brewery and is made a peer; another, equally rich, becomes a baronet. The mayor of a country town, the clerk of a city company, the greatest traveller of modern days, the greatest physician in the country, the greatest musician —may all alike be rewarded by being made knight bachelors. The others—the superior orders—are reserved for the services, and especially for the army.

Now, I am not prepared, in an American magazine, to defend the institution of rank. But we must take things as they are. In every country where it exists—that is, in all European countries—those callings which are *outside* the pale of distinctions are regarded with a certain contempt. Thus, while a man who has a big brewery may obtain a peerage, a man with a big draper's shop can hardly hope for a knighthood, save in connection with civic honours. Literature, like retail trade, cobbling, and chimney-sweeping, is excluded rigorously from distinction. What is the nation, then, to think of literature as a calling? It is—it must be—as one worthy of no honour.' Wealth may be regarded;

lawyers, physicians, surgeons, architects, sculptors, painters, engineers, may all look for rank and distinction—but not literature. Tennyson, it is true, is a peer, but he is the lonely single example; he is the exception. Browning was never offered anything. Dickens, Thackeray, George Eliot, Swinburne—what has been offered to these great writers? Perhaps they would take nothing. That is quite another thing. The fact remains that the official mind has not conceived it possible that literature should be deemed worthy of such honours as the nation has to bestow. One of two things seems to follow: either the production or noble literature is not a service to the nation or the national honours are of no value.

A nation which professes to confer distinction upon its leading men, and refuses distinction to any one branch of service, does its very best to bring contempt upon that branch. Who, for instance, would go into the Royal Engineers if that corps were excluded from the military orders, the rank, the titles, the honours that are freely bestowed upon the cavalry and the line? Would not this branch of the service fall into contempt? Yet that is exactly what is done to the literary branch of the service. Perhaps it would be best to abolish all rank. I only maintain that while rank is continued, to exclude any liberal profession is to insult and to degrade that profession in the eyes of the nation.

I have already elsewhere pointed out this absurdity; it has been received in a way which illustrates—one could not wish for a better illustration—the very things I maintain. The *Spectator*, for instance, in a long article assumed that I wanted all writers of distinction to be knighted. Observe that the mind of the writer of that article—in a paper recognised for its breadth and good sense—could not possibly rise above the lowest and least form of distinction. The writer could not conceive it possible that a man of letters should dare, should presume to hope, for more than an honour which would put him on the same level as a city sheriff. Of course, what I claimed was that literature, like law and the services, should be open to everything, even to the highest rank of the peerage. It is idle to talk about Englishmen not desiring rank; they do desire it. Many solid things go with rank; a newly-made baronet, for instance, is received everywhere with a certain consideration, and social consideration is a very real thing. Few Englishmen ever refuse rank, except certain statesmen, in their own interests—Gladstone could not, every one feels, accept a peerage—but these cases are very, very few. There are certain old families which are proud of having refused titles for many hundreds of years, but these also are very few. Certain great scientific men have refused rank because the humble knighthood generally offered them is too ludicrous, and they do not desire

hereditary rank, to which it is felt money should be attached. And most men of letters would certainly refuse the proffer of the lowest distinction. Yet it would be good for the nation that even by such an offer their services to the country should be recognised. Meantime, the most remarkable point in the Victorian age will probably be the fact that the men who made the greatest glory of the age—the men of science and of literature—received no honour, no recognition, no encouragement, from the advisers of the Victorian court. They have been absolutely neglected.

Then again, to go back to the question of dollars. In other professions there are many great and solid prizes. A very successful lawyer may make ten thousand pounds a year; many lawyers make five or six thousand pounds a year. A very successful physician may make fifteen thousand pounds a year; many physicians make five or six thousand pounds a year. Of engineers it is notorious that many have made colossal fortunes; of architects, solicitors, accountants, actuaries, the same may be said. Even in the Church there are bishoprics, deaneries, canonries, and benefices which, in comparison with the majority, may be reckoned fat. There are thousands in every profession to whom these prizes are absolutely unattainable: the rank and file remain without promotion because they lack the ability to rise. Professional success means ability of

a special and unusual kind. But these prizes glorify the profession—even the profession of the Church—and they give it dignity in the eyes of the world, to whom a poorly remunerated calling is always more or less contemptible.

Now turn to the literary profession. It is, to begin with, in the popular estimation, regarded as a poor and beggarly trade. People cannot be persuaded that there is any income to be got out of it. They think of Johnson sending his publisher that famous note, '*Impransus*'; yet Johnson was actually poor for only a very brief space, only while his wife was in the country and he was in town. They remember Goldsmith's distresses, yet forget that Goldsmith was a spendthrift, and that he made while at his best over two thousand pounds a year. They think of Chatterton starving—but they forget that he was only a boy, ignorant of the town and its resources. They think of the 'Royal Literary Fund,' with its annual dinner and its annual appeal for the poor author. They think of Savage, Otway, and the whole tribe of starveling poets; but they forget the sufficiency, if not the affluence, that awaited Southey and Leigh Hunt and many others. They read how publishers have 'generously' given this and that sum; the tale is taken up by the papers and is made the subject of leading articles. So that this literary calling, though the work produced may be almost divine, though it provide

thought, teaching, leading, amusement, for the whole world, appears in the light of a company of hungry poets, all with their hats off before the man who has got the bag, imploring and beseeching and begging for 'generosity.'

Things are not quite so bad. Yet when, not long ago, a statement was made in the *Author* that there were fifty men and women in Great Britain and the States who were making a thousand pounds a year and upwards by writing novels, the statement was received with derisive laughter. Fifty novelists making a thousand a year? Impossible! Preposterous! The statement, however, was made by one who knew what he was saying. It is a true statement; it represents the real prizes of the profession. There are in London alone, it is said, fifteen thousand people who in some branch or other exercise the literary profession. Fifty of them by writing novels make over a thousand pounds a year. What do the rest make? This brings us to the consideration of the modern literary life—what it is.

First of all, those who frankly live by writing have of late years received an immense enlargement of independence by the development of journalism. It is not too much to say that forty years ago almost the only papers for which scholars wrote were the *Times* and the newly-founded *Saturday Review*. We all remember the journalism depicted by Thackeray—Captain Shandon in the debtor's prison:

the critic who seizes the books and cuts up the author in a tavern. All that is changed. The editorials of the great journals in London and in the country are written by scholars and gentlemen; journalists of the better kind have their clubs and their suburban houses. It is reckoned a fortunate thing, as well as a most honourable thing, to occupy a position as leader-writer on a great daily. Then, again, there is another departure of quite recent date. The new fashion of journalism depends less upon its staff of regular leader-writers, with whom there is the danger that they may not keep abreast of the day, than upon the special papers invited by the editor, contributed and signed by men who happen to be authorities upon the subject. This opens up a great field. And the number of papers is simply enormous; there seems no end to them. Every trade, every profession, has its organ. The circulation of the weekly penny papers may be reckoned at millions; all these papers vie with each other in getting the best fiction, the most striking articles possible; they offer a means of subsistence—not a mere pittance, but a handsome income—to hundreds of writers. Out of one office alone there is poured every week a mass of fiction representing as much bulk as an ordinary three-volume novel. The daily papers with their leading articles, the high-class weeklies, such as the *Saturday Review*, the *Spectator*, the *Athenæum*, the *Guardian*, the *Speaker*, and a

few others, with their leaders, political and social, and their reviews, give occupation to a large number of the best literary men and women; and the popular weeklies employ a much larger number of the rank and file.

As for the monthly magazines, they form also an additional staff, not a crutch, for the writer. In a little analysis undertaken a short time ago, I discovered that, taking the seven leading magazines for the last three years, out of eight hundred articles, on all the topics which have occupied our thoughts during that time, three hundred and twenty, or two-fifths, were written on some point connected with the literary craft by writers who were also scholars. Further, that the number of these writers was about seventy, which represents an average of four and a half papers by each writer during the three years. One cannot, therefore, live by writing for the monthlies. There are now, however, so many of these that if a man has anything to say he can reckon on finding some place where he will be allowed to speak.

All these papers, all these weekly journals, all these monthly magazines, require editors. Scores of editors are wanted; most of them are not expected to give their whole time to their official posts. And many editors are engaged for part of the day in their own work. A literary man of the present day may carry on all his literary work

—all that he can do—for as many hours of the day as is good for him, together with as much journalistic work as will suffice to render him independent of his publisher. This is an enormous gain. Perhaps it has its dangers: the papers become exacting; they may grow too attractive; they may absorb a man so that he will produce little beyond his work for the Ephemerides. Here, again, the philosopher may remark that those men are few indeed whose original work may be considered so precious that the loss of it cannot be supplied.

The number of men who actually live by the production of original work, apart from journalism in any of its branches, is comparatively small. There are half a dozen dramatists; about a hundred novelists; a few successful writers of educational books, which are, indeed, a mine of wealth if one can succeed; and a few publishers' hacks. The greatest prizes are those of the dramatists. But the stage is a fortress very hard to take: many there are who sit down before it and presently retire vanquished. They console themselves, for the most part, with the reflection that their plays are too good for the theatre-goer. One would not disturb them in the belief. At the same time we may whisper that a good play—one which strikes the imagination, holds the audience, fills the house with tears and laughter, a strong play, a bold play, a skilful play—is never too

good for any audience, not even the much-abused audience of a London playhouse.

There are over fifty novelists, as has been already stated, in America and Great Britain whose income from the literary calling amounts to more than a thousand pounds a year. The most common method of procedure here is to sell the serial right first, and to make a new arrangement for the volume form. Of course the new Copyright Act will make a great difference with novelists who are so happy as to have a following on both sides of the Atlantic. There is a broad step between these novelists and those whose hold of the public is less secure. There is a broader step still between the second rank of popularity and the third and those below it. The three-volume system has produced one very remarkable result: it allows the existence of some fifty writers whose novels nobody wants. These novels, quite harmless, very dull, only read by girls in dull and monotonous houses, come out in three volumes. The publishers pay the writers from fifty to a hundred pounds for each novel; they know exactly how many copies will be taken by the circulating libraries, and they do not print one copy more. Their own profit is about double the amount given to the author. If there were no circulating libraries, with their subscribers crying 'Give! give!' these novels would not appear. We need not pretend to any virtuous indignation at these produc-

tions, because they die as soon as they have answered their little purpose of filling the book-box, and because their authors have neither the courage nor the originality to write anything that would do harm to anybody.

Far below this level is a depth—dark, black, terrible—into which sink those hapless wretches who have attempted to live by writing fiction without the natural aptitude and the necessary equipment of learning, experience, and observation. One of these has written for me a brief account of his present condition. He is, I believe, a man of forty, or perhaps less. He began life with a fine enthusiasm and soaring ambitions. He would be a great writer. Well, he had, I believe, a certain thin vein which, if cultivated carefully, might have led to something. But he was ignorant. He belonged to the ranks of clerkery. He was educated in a school where the sons of clerks prepare for the life of clerkery. They do not teach much in these schools—arithmetic, book-keeping, a good hand, care in spelling, the proper manner of commencing and ending and addressing a letter, perhaps shorthand, a pretence at French, perhaps a nibbling at Latin, a little geography, less history—this was all that the boy learned. Then he became a clerk, and presently tried to become a novelist. Understand that he knew nothing—nothing at all—of the constitution, laws, order, professions, society, manners and customs, univer-

tities, army, navy—in short, he knew nothing at all about his own country. But he began to write stories, all, really and truly, out of his own head. Presently, to his great unhappiness—which he did not at first suspect—his fervent prayers were answered to his own undoing, a way which the gods sometimes have. He sent a story to a certain editor, who accepted it and gave him a little advice about the *technique* of story-telling—of a kind. He had more stories accepted—and still more. Then he thought himself justified in giving up his clerkship and devoting his whole time to this weaving of conventional and unreal fiction for obscure magazines. In this occupation he has since continued; indeed, he can do nothing else. It is an occupation in which there is cut-throat competition. He is married; he has children. He writes all day long and every day; he produces story after story; he is paid £2 10s. for a story of twenty thousand words; he writes the penny 'novelettes' that are sold by the ten thousand and bought by factory girls and servant girls. When things are desperate, he sends begging letters to men whose names he knows.

There would seem nothing lower or more miserable than the lot of those who try to earn a livelihood by the production of bad fiction. But there is a small—now rapidly decreasing—class more miserable still. It is the class which lives by

manufacturing books not wanted. The maker of books—the man who first brought the name of author into contempt—is still with us, but he is rare. Heaven knows what first induced that man to make a book. He has no charm of style; he has neither fancy nor imagination, nor wit nor humour; he cannot call up tears or laughter; he cannot arrest the attention; he never writes books that any human being cares to read; he spoils every subject which he touches; he bungles, blunders, and plunders. No one knows how or why he ever gets a commission to make any one of his books, but he does: he gets paid for every book—fifty pounds, seventy-five pounds, a hundred pounds. He is always impecunious; he lives from hand to mouth; the 'Royal Literary Fund' regards him as a pensioner, so regular are his applications. When things are very hard, he, too, sends round a begging letter. Wretched, miserable, servile trade! You may see the few who remain in it at the British Museum reading-room. With the spread of education their occupation will vanish. The time has come when all the world can write at least as well as these poor denizens of Grub Street. The time has come when only those who have a thing to say will secure a hearing.

Once more—what are the encouragements to the literary life? You have seen there are apparently none. The first, the essential encouragement to

any profession, that it should be independent of the employer—as the physician, the barrister, the solicitor, the architect, the beneficed clergyman, is independent—is wanting in the literary life. I believe we shall succeed in conferring this independence upon writers, in which case we shall render to literature a service greater than has ever yet been dreamed of or attempted, a service which shall at once lift the author to the same level as the lawyer or the physician. There are no great prizes or emoluments. That is true, but the prizes are substantial. A man who does good work will then be assured of the prizes that belong to him. There are but few who can afford to live by writing novels, plays, poems, essays, or the like. Most true: and whatever happens, the number must always remain comparatively few. But the literary life can be carried on with many other things—in the civil service, for instance—with any pursuit which does not demand all the thoughts during all the day. One of our living poets is a solicitor; two others are in the civil service; one of our living novelists is a grower of fruit for the London markets; another was for twenty years the secretary of a society. Of other successful writers, the larger number are journalists. So let them continue. Far better, though it limit the production, than to join the crowd of those who have to besiege publishers' doors and to beg humbly for better terms.

No encouragements to the literary life? Of outside encouragement, none, none, none. Why, then, this rush, this competition, this ardent yearning, which draw thousands to try their fortune, year after year, with poem, with novel, or with play? Hundreds, thousands of MSS. are on their travels at this moment from publisher to publisher. One recognises them by the marks on the outside page. This number shows the hand of the house; this mark reveals the fact that another house has refused it, and so on. Why is it, if there are no encouragements? There are two reasons. The first, the simplest, the reason which accounts for ninety-nine out of every hundred, is that it seems, of all ways of making money, the easiest. Girls, especially, are gifted with the facile pen. They all want money; they want to be independent; they envy the girl who makes her own income and lives as she pleases. To write a novel seems the easiest way. They do write that novel; they glow with anticipation of success; then comes the time of bitterness and of disappointment. Needless to say, they find that the way to fame and fortune is not so easy as it seems. The belief that money is easily made by literature—that is the chief reason why these thousands of pens in these islands are rushing, flying, driving across the everlasting plains—the endless prairie—of paper.

But it is not the only reason. There remains the

man or woman born for the work. His gift may be small, his vein slender. But he is a man of letters from his youth upward. The encouragement to him is that writing is the breath of his life; he must say what is in him; he has a message of some kind; he has a power of some kind; if he cannot preach he can paint; language to him is a force, an instrument, a vehicle, unknown to the vulgar; words and phrases are living things; a happy turn rejoices him; an unexpected phrase fills him with joy. He knows the meaning of style and form—happy if he is not carried by love of style so far as to forget that style is nothing if there is nothing behind it—as fine clothes are nothing without a living body beneath them. To him writing is a continual joy when, which is not always, he can command his thoughts and force them under the yoke of language. This exercise of force makes writing a struggle as well as a joy; there is battle in it; there is defeat; there is victory in it.

The first and greatest encouragement of the literary life at the present moment is the joy of it. The next encouragement is the honour of success. We have dwelt so much upon the contempt of literature that this may seem a contradiction. It is not, however, any contradiction. Side by side with the general contempt for the literary class there exists a profound admiration—nay, a love—for the man who

has succeeded. Not because he has succeeded, but because, in order to succeed as a poet, a dramatist, a novelist, even an essayist, one must touch the hearts of people. We love—we cannot choose but love—the man or the woman who can touch our hearts. Go to the church, listen to the scholarship, the sound doctrine, the logic, of the learned divine in the pulpit. You listen and you go away; you have learned something, perhaps, but you feel no gratitude to the teacher. In another pulpit hard-by there stands a man who speaks from his heart. The eyes of the people are riveted upon him; they are motionless; he has carried them out of themselves: when they go home their hearts glow within them, their cheeks burn. Which of the two preachers does the world love? It is so with actors, with orators, with all who teach, or preach, or play, or amuse. The world loves the successful man because he commands their love. He touches their hearts. Therefore, while they despise the helpless dependent, the uncertain, unpractical trade of letters, they love the man of letters who can move them. Perhaps the two encouragements are powerful enough to counterbalance all the discouragements.

To conclude, the discouragements are all of such a nature that they may be remedied. It is quite possible to place the man of letters on the same footing of independence as is now occupied by the barrister and the physician. It is quite possible to

create such a body, not a servile copy of the French Academy, as shall exercise a restraining influence upon extravagance and a certain guiding influence in taste. This done, recognition by the State will naturally follow. One does not crave for the ordinary titles and distinctions. Science is ennobled by 'Fellowship of the Royal Society.' Literature might perhaps be most fitly ennobled in the same way. The defence and protection of authors by some central body must also be provided—this has already been attempted, with a fair measure of success. All these things are possible and practicable. All, we hope, will be undertaken; all, we hope, will be carried through by men and women of letters acting together as a company, a guild, a profession, an association.

[1892.]

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